THE QUEEN'S STORY BOOK

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THE QUEEN'S STORY BOOK

HE STRODE THROUGH THE CENTRE OF THE WHISPERING COURTIERS.

[*See page 132.*

THE QUEEN'S STORY BOOK

BEING HISTORICAL STORIES COLLECTED OUT OF ENGLISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE IN ILLUSTRATION OF THE REIGNS OF ENGLISH MONARCHS FROM THE CONQUEST TO QUEEN VICTORIA

AND EDITED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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TO

MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

IN the *King's Story Book* I ventured upon a new departure in books designed to amuse, and the venture answered every expectation. It supplied specimens of our romantic prose literature to many who would gladly know more of what English literature has to say of English history. But of course the mine was not exhausted, and in the present volume, designed upon the same principle as its predecessor, further contributions are presented. The great masters Scott and Thackeray, together with Lytton, John Galt, Ainsworth and others, are again called upon, while specimens from writers not used in the former volume—Daniel Defoe, Thomas Love Peacock, Lord Beaconsfield and others, together with stories from Lord Berner's Elizabethan translation of Froissart's chronicle—are now included. Most people who love the masters of English literature have their favourite passages, passages that have been read through dozens of times, and always with equal zest. To present many such passages as separate stories will, I think, be an acceptable offering to the fireside literature of our day.

The history presented by this volume begins with the events which crowned the great victory at Hastings. These events have passed from history to tradition, and from tradition back again into historical fiction. The woful search of Edith for the dead body of her beloved Harold the King is a theme which reaches the young through a more subtle channel than that of text-book or class lecture. They learn it as they learn about King Alfred and the cakes and about Cinderella—that is, in a manner not to be stated with categorical nicety and precision, for it seems to have come to them through the air they breathe. And delightful it is to know of these few germs of traditional stories growing

up from English history, for, unlike most people with a history, the English do not, so to speak, live with it. They keep it afar off as a thing that concerns them not, except as a matter of training or of individual taste. But the fair form of Edith and that grisly search among the dead is nearer to the popular mind than most other events. Sir Charles Napier's not very well known story of this episode is characteristic enough, flavoured though it is with a morality which does not belong to the age of the event. For William II. I have chosen the story of an anonymous writer of some considerable power. He depicts the King on the eve of the rebellion of Stephen of Aumale; and the tyranny of the monarch, the feeling of the nobles, the position of Flambard, all assembled at the council, are powerfully shown. "Now, afore God and His holy saints!" exclaims Hugh, Earl of Chester, "from the crown of thy head downward, and from the sole of thy foot upward, William of England! thou art, past thought and speech, a matchless tyrant!" Henry I. is not represented in this volume; there is no romance which illustrates his reign. The story of Matilda at Reading Abbey is by Charles Macfarlane, and though perhaps not true of this particular abbey, is typical of the position assumed by Matilda during her brief triumph on the English throne.

The story of fair Rosamond's death at the hands of Queen Eleanor begins the rule of the Plantagenets. This is another story belonging to history proper which has descended to popular tradition. The episode in this volume is written by Thomas Miller, and is perhaps one of the least satisfactory stories in the volume, though perhaps it does not do much violence to the character of this vindictive queen. For that great hero of romance, Richard Cœur de Lion, Thomas Love Peacock's fine story of *Maid Marian* is chosen, and Richard stands out well in close analogy to the episode dealt with by Scott. The reign of John is not represented, and Henry III. and his queen are only introduced by a slight picture of their court taken from one of the forgotten novels of Mrs. Radcliffe. Miss Porter's romance of the *Scottish Chiefs* supplies the story for Edward I.'s reign, but this once popular romance is not of a sufficiently high quality to be able to stand in contrast with the rest of

the volume. Both the great Scottish hero and the great English king are somewhat stunted compared with their true position. The next three reigns are represented by extracts from Froissart's chronicle in Lord Berner's translation. To the charms of the Tudor English are added the delightful touches of the original chronicles, and I am sure these specimens of a famous historian will be welcomed. The adventures of Queen Isabella in France, whither she went to seek aid against her miserable husband, Edward II., are particularly delightful, showing how gold and silver are the metals "whereby love is attained both of gentlemen and of poor soldiers." The well-known battle of Nevil's Cross fought by Queen Philippa during the absence of Edward III. before Calais and the deposition of Richard II. are the two events in illustration of these reigns. I fancy that the story of Henry's treatment of Richard II. will be new to many readers.

The House of Lancaster has not been the subject of many romances, romantic though the period and events are. Henry IV. is not represented by a separate story, and for Henry V. I have chosen a scene from James' *Agincourt.* It represents the king in his changed character as monarch, with reminiscences of the wild young prince; and though this author's romances are, of course, very inferior in character, this particular story is not altogether unhappy in its delineation of London and the events of a coronation. Of the disastrous reign of Henry VI., the far-famed exploits of Joan of Arc are a fitting representation, and Miss Manning's extremely fine picture supplies a very capital story, a story that does not lose by contrast with the recently published work of Mark Twain. Joan's thoroughness of purpose comes out in every sentence put into her mouth, and altogether there is the ring of truth about this story. "It is very terrible and very grand" is Joan's remark when she hears cannon shot for the first time, and the reader feels it too.

The Yorkists are represented by a description of King Edward IV.'s court by Lord Lytton, a description which is more ornate and more telling, perhaps, as a story than anything which has gone before. It lets one, so to speak, into the secrets of the royal household, and makes one feel

on confidential terms with the dissolute and able monarch. Warwick's deep character and Clarence's wayward youthfulness are also well delineated in this clever bit of writing. The young Edward V. is not represented, and Richard III. is told of by Mary Shelley in the events which immediately followed his death, the character of Perkin Warbeck appearing to do duty for Richard Duke of York, whom he impersonated.

The Tudor sovereigns introduce us to other events. From Mrs. Shelley's romance is chosen the story which shows up Henry VII.'s selfishness and cynical cruelty, and one of the best of Ainsworth's stories supplies the illustration of Henry VIII.'s reign, in the fall of Cardinal Wolsey and the rise of Anne Boleyn. Ainsworth is always true to localities, and Windsor Castle appears very close to us when reading this story. It was during this reign that the style of "Majesty" was applied to an English sovereign, and it is interesting to note that in this respect all the authors who have written in the earlier reigns correctly represent the court etiquette. Edward VI. is not represented, and Ainsworth is again called upon to supply the story for Mary's reign, the Queen's marriage with the hated Spaniard forming a very taking narrative with its exhibition of court intrigue and personal details. For the reign of Elizabeth, the great genius of Scott supplies the story, and although it is perhaps one of his least satisfactory works, it is astonishing how grandly the work of the master stands out. The story of Amy Robsart is a fine one, and all the picturesqueness of that famous court masque at Kenilworth comes upon the reader with welcome freshness. Elizabeth's queenly dignity and womanly feeling were surely never better displayed than here, while the gallantry of Raleigh and the fickle inconstancy of Leicester are only touches of the same hand that illumines the darkness of past ages by the Queen's natural allusion to "my godson Harrington," who could tell her of the fairy she had read of in some Italian rhymes.

But the Stuart period shows Scott at his best. Who could wish a better picture of King James than that taken from *Nigel*? The humour of the whole thing is always counterbalanced by the unconscious dignity of the narra-

tive, and though we laugh at the pedantic old monarch, we love him nevertheless. Scott's James the First is the King who will always live, for he is so human. There is probably nothing more quaintly humorous in the realm of fiction than the story of the King teaching his jeweller how to present a petition—it is a story that every one has read hundreds of times. I have appealed to Daniel Defoe to supply a narrative of the battle of Edgehill, to illustrate the reign of Charles I. The story will be welcome, even if only on account of its delightful simplicity and truthful description of the battle and its results. Scott again contributes when we come to Charles II., and the court scene taken from *Peveril of the Peak* gives us the merry monarch to the very life. This is one of the longest stories in the book, but it could not have been shortened. John Galt tells the story of Argyle's fall in the reign of James II., and this episode is a great turning-point in the history of this fateful reign. For William and Mary we first come upon a story of William Makepeace Thackeray, and the faithfulness of the picture, the irony with which the sham sentiment of Lady Castlewood is shown up, the little glimpse we get of Dick Steele, Scholar Dick, are all delightful. For the reign of Anne I have chosen the greatest story in the whole book. It is from Thackeray's *Esmond*. Looked at in whatever way it is possible, I think this remarkable piece of writing is perhaps truer to history than even historical narrative itself. There is no foundation, so far as I know, for the actual episode supposed to have taken place, but it is the one episode which would account for all the circumstances of this great event. And the detail is so splendid. The coach going across the country from Kensington to Chelsea is at once a touch of illuminating truth, and the truth subordinated to the place proper to its right understanding. The sorry pettiness of the whole surroundings, the stirring picture of indignant renunciation of the prince by two loyal adherents, the grim humour of the French training of the prince—there is scarcely a line that is not indicative of the master's hand, and those who have read this story so often will again read it in its present place with all the old delight.

The period of the Guelphs opens up new scenes. The

results of 1715, rather than the events themselves, are pourtrayed for us by Sir Walter Scott in the story taken from *Rob Roy*. Then for George II. Thackeray leads us into the court of the King with its pettiness and its insincerity, its red-faced king and his red-faced son, its obsequious courtiers and its fawning bishops, the great solemn Pitt, and withal the simplicity if not the commonplaceness of the whole affair. It is a biting but not an untrue narrative. The accession of George III. brings us back again to the Stuarts and to Scott, and it is not uninteresting to note that our Queen's grandfather was in touch with the romanticism of the Stuart episode. The story told by Scott has some foundation in fact, and certainly in probability. For George IV. and William IV. there are no representative stories, and the series closes with a description of one of the scenes of the Chartist riots belonging to the reign of the Queen and told by Lord Beaconsfield. Even these events seem too far off to belong to the present reign. Inspired by the genius of a great romancist, the story, though marking an unpleasant episode of this great reign, is good in all respects, and at all events serves to show those of this generation how much we have advanced since such things were possible.

No alteration is made in the original narrative except to leave out irrelevant passages and allusions, and very occasionally to alter a sentence slightly so as to avoid inconsistencies in the scheme of a short story. Otherwise each story is lifted from its place in the original work to the place assigned to it in this collection. Thus the whole volume deals with events of our English history as they are related in romantic literature.

LAURENCE GOMME.

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I

From Queen to Queen

SCARCELY had the victorious army of the Normans given up pursuit, through the obscurity, and re-assembled on the field of its triumph, than the pale moon arose, casting her effulgence over the ensanguined battle-ground: thousands and tens of thousands there lay, all grim and ghastly to the view; the silvery light displayed their gashes, and showed the blood of life yet trickling from the wound. Here and there the imprisoned soul still shook its mortal habitation with convulsive quiverings, marking approaching death; and faint moanings, testifying man's cruelty, still floated on the air from distant parts of the field.

"Now," exclaimed the Conqueror, "let us kneel and thank the Almighty, who has given us this great victory."

As he said this, the remnants of the Neustrian army laid their stained weapons down, kneeled, and raised their bloody hands in solemn invocation to the Deity. Odo, gory and mitred, chanted forth hymns of peace and good-will towards man, and thankfulness, and masses for the slain!

In truth it was a very blasphemy, and some could not give thanks that night: stern as William Malet was, he wept for the friends of those bloodless bodies that lay bleaching around in heaps. Sixty thousand Saxons there weltered in their blood; and the men who had done this

butchery were kneeling to the God of all, amidst the impious havoc!

When prayers were over they began to inter the slain Normans, writing down as killed the names of all those who answered not when called; of these there were above twenty thousand—in sooth it was a hardly-earned victory.

While thus employed a fresh scene of woe took place: the two monks of Waltham presented themselves to the Conqueror. They were followed by a long train of holy men, and came over that desecrated hill chanting a requiem for the dead. As the solemn harmony flung its floating strains upon the still air, the soldiers ceased to speak or move, all listening to the mournful melody. The procession wound slowly down the steep, threading among the slain, where scant space was found for living foot to fall unwet with human gore. The sacred band advanced, exalting the reproachful crucifix amidst the sacrilegious desolation; censers in front cast incense, whose curling smoke caught the moonbeams, and circling upwards seemed, in conjunction with that solemn dirge, more acceptable to Heaven than did the fierce Odo's exultant prayers.

The tonsured supplicants came to demand in God's name that they might inter the dead.

"Mercy, great Conqueror! mercy to the vanquished!"

"It is granted to all," answered William; "I war not with the dead! and I will prove my words, holy fathers, even now in your presence. Where is the knight who smote the dead body of Harold with his sword? Bring him before me." The knight came forth: "Give me thy sword," said the duke, and in a voice of anger that always made those about him quail. The knight tremblingly obeyed. William, taking the weapon in his gauntleted hands, broke it into pieces.

"There, base and recreant soldier! know that he who insults a dead enemy is as much disgraced as he who turns his back upon a living one! Get thee hence!"

The caitiff sneaked away, condemned and cast out by all.

"Now, holy fathers, do such honour to the dead as best beseemeth you, without further let or hindrance."

"Sire!" said the monks, "we still crave a boon at thy hands: in the name of the Saviour of the world, grant us the body of Harold?"

William paused for a moment; but the natural generosity of his disposition, not being opposed by any political advantage, swayed him.

"Granted, even that traitor's corpse; but ye will have some trouble ere ye find it amidst the heaps of slain. Sir William Malet, hie thee with these good monks, and take such order that none insult them, nor offer indignity to the body of Harold, nor to any Saxon, dead or alive. Where Harold fell, and where his standard stood, shall a convent be erected in memory of this great battle."

The monks bowed to the victor, and proceeded up the height.

On arriving there the moonlight fell upon an awful sight. A kneeling female figure, her white garments steeped in blood, hung over the disfigured corpse of Harold; a profusion of hair hid her head, but her lips seemed to be pressed to his. The fatal arrow drawn from the wound lay before her, and hillocks of slain rose about her, out of which she had drawn the mangled corpse. As they approached, she raised her head—it was Editha! Her beauteous face was greatly agitated. "I will not quit him—kill me if ye will, murderers! ye shall not divide me from him now." With a violent tone she spoke, dropped a cross she held, and clasped the dead body in her arms with maniac look and energy, raising it from the ground and pressing the head to her breast.

"Dear lady," said Wulstan, "knowest thou not thy friends? We are all thine own."

"Then who is that Norman—what does he here? Ha! Sir William Malet, is it thou? Get thee hence, thou mur-

derer of the Saxons! Look here, bloodthirsty man, and see what ye have done! Hence from my sight, or finish thy hateful work, and add the blood of Editha to that which now clots upon thy horrid weapon; it is the only Saxon blood that Editha can spare thee, and dying she will bless the hand that sheds it."

Malet did not answer, and the good monk saw that he could not answer.

"Lady," said he, "we have leave to bear the body hence to Waltham; and this good knight——"

"Callest thou a Norman good? O Wulstan! Wulstan! cast thine eyes here, and all around, and with thy Saxon tongue canst thou call Normans good?"

"Dear lady of the Saxons! patience, patience! Behold this!" said the monk as he picked up her crucifix; "let not that fall! for quitting it, what shall support us in this world of miseries—with it, what shall we fear?"

"Father, thy reproof is just, but call not the Normans good, and tell this Norman to go hence from the sight of Editha."

"Let us all hence, that we may pay the last homage to the body of the King, and inter his mortal remains with due religious rites at Waltham; and let us hasten, for day will soon dawn and the victor may change his will, and then who shall say him nay?"

Editha consented.

"O God, I am in thine hands! I see there is one way in which these hateful Normans can yet make Editha tremble"; again she kissed the cold lips of Harold and rose up to let the monks take his body, which they laid upon a bier, and proceeded to Waltham.

The rumour soon spread that the Saxon people would be safe if they came to bury the dead, and that sorrowful field was quickly covered with wailing and distracted women and children.

Then the Normans marched towards Dover, and being

fearful of the danger to which Editha was exposed, Sir William Malet followed her to Waltham; the Conqueror had given him strict charge to maintain all that country in tranquillity and free from pillage—for so his policy demanded.

When Editha and her melancholy train approached Waltham, she was met by a vast multitude of unarmed Saxons, men, women, and children; and as the bloody corpse of the slain King passed by lamentations arose, and loud wailings filled the air. Then, moved by some sudden impulse, and with one accord, that great throng of mourners fell upon their knees in silence and in prayers for the slain.

"Stop," cried Editha to the bearers of the body; "set him down, and on these hallowed relics let me pray in the midst of the people for whom he has fallen."

There was a small tumulus hard by, and on this spot, where the bones of inhumated warriors reposed, they laid the lifeless hero of the Saxons. Editha kneeled beside the remains of her husband, her lips moved in silent prayer, a few big tears rolled down her wan face, and her eyes were bent with an expression of doubt on those disfigured features, as if yet searching for life; then hopelessly raising her looks to heaven, like one imploring pity in this dread moment of bitterest agony, she prayed inwardly. And all that multitude prayed with her; and thousands were there, like her bereaved of all; and thousands still poured in upon that vast crowd, fresh, horror-stricken, from the field of desolation, while convulsive sobs and maniac screams here and there disturbed the religious silence.

Then sung the monks a loud Saxon dirge in honour of the fallen. Editha stooped over the body, and her rich hair hid the tears which streamed upon the face of Harold, mingling with his blood. The assembled Saxons joined in the hymn, and when the sacred song ceased, the body was again raised and borne to the grave within the chapel; but not by the monks—twelve Saxon warriors whose wounds were fresh, burst from the crowd.

"Lady, we fled not from the field; we long lay senseless amidst the slaughter; we stood by thy husband in many a battle, we deserted him not yesterday, and we will yet die fighting upon his body, if so the Normans please, for not without a blow shall the guards of Harold fall. Like these weapons," said they, showing their battle-axes gory and gapped, "we are injured, but not yet broken."

Editha held out her hand to the speaker, but had no power to do more; they kissed her proffered hand, lifted the body of their lifeless monarch, and, as the solemn dirge again arose, they bore him to the tomb.

The earth was now cast upon the coffin of Harold. It fell with a sound that jarred, ruthless, cold, withering, upon the heart of Editha. It was the last sound she heard. She sunk lifeless in the arms of those who stood around her.

When she recovered, she found herself in bed; her weeping companions were by her side. The good Wulstan entered; he reasoned with the sorrowing queen, but Editha found consolation in her own reflection alone, which told her that life swiftly passes—that health and strength were not bestowed upon her to cast away as things of no value.

Time gradually produced a state of resignation to her life of sorrow, and when Matilda came to England the following letter told her, that her predecessor on the throne still lived:—

"Editha to Matilda.

"To thee, Matilda, I send the crown I once wore. While shared with Harold, this gift of the Saxons was dear to me. Harold is slain; the Saxons are no longer a people. Take then their crown, and let it bespeak thy protection for the oppressed."

—Sir Charles Napier, *William the Conqueror.*

II

At the Disposal of the King

FIVE days after Robert de Mowbray had been proclaimed a traitor at the cross of Winchester, his title and government annulled, and all his possessions confiscated to the crown, a knight, Alberic du Coci, burst suddenly, and with streaming brow and flashing eyes, into the presence of King William and his minister Flambard.

"News, mighty Sovereign!" he exclaimed, hurrying to the royal seat, and flinging himself upon one knee, almost breathless with haste and excitement.

"News?" said the King. "What news, Brazen-brow? they should be passing good, in amends of thy saucy bluntness!"

"Pardon, my gracious Liege," returned the vassal, "hot love forgets cold form. My news are passing evil, if your Grace stir not with the fairer speed for their telling. The arch-rebel, De Mowbray, is up and doing with a mighty power in the North! He hath spread banner at York, at Durham, at Alnwick, and at Bamborough; and, at the four gates of each, with voice of herald and blast of trumpet, proclaimed Stephen de Albemarle King of England."

Rufus bounded from his seat.

"Oh, spacious villain!" he cried; "oh, mighty traitor! hath he but one head? one life? King, saidst thou? Oh, monstrous rebel! hast thou a dog, Du Coci, that would lap Earl's blood, ha?"

"Better, my Liege," said the Knight, "a sword to shed it for your Grace, if it be God's pleasure; but, by my faith, there will lack ten thousand besides, and sharp and true ones. Stephen himself——"

"Ho! what of him?" shouted the Monarch—"what of our traitor-cousin, in Hell's name?—what of the doubly-damned De Albemarle?"

"Sped to De Mowbray," answered Sir Alberic; "some say at York—some further south; but, all agree, with a vast strength, levied in the midland shires as he trooped north. Their numbers, or equipment, or what traitor-names have joined them, as leaders or as allies, God knows, my Sovereign Liege, not I."

"Why! we will march and see! What recks it? ho! summon De Miles! where sleeps Montgomery in this pinch? Get thee to bed, good Ranulph; no market now for thy politic wares."

"Tush—tush, my Liege—fairer than ever," said Flambard; "wit is sharper than steel, and shall yet be at higher price. Hark, Du Coci, where didst thou, of all men, basket up these tidings?"

"Further north," replied Sir Alberic, "than I have knowledge of tower and town to tell ye. I have been scouring in bootless quest of one that fiends, surely, have snatched from earth, and met, by the way, with those who had fast knowledge that this is sooth; the rather, that they themselves were hot upon the spur to join King Stephen—I pray Heaven and your Grace to pardon me the word."

"Oh, gracious fool!" cried Rufus, "to let hence his prating daughter and her champion! Thou wert right, Ranulph—it is they that have carried the lit torch to this pile of treason! He waited but for them—ha! Black-hearted villains! Their heads shall answer it. What! nothing but tricks of treason? Whither away, my Lord Justiciary?"

"To summon aid and council, I," said Flambard, "and

that with such speed as horse, and herald, and trumpet-call can do it. By God, my Liege, we must have gold! if it be dug for in men's hearts, where, as I live and breathe, I think the greedy villains hide it from us in these pinches. For what with these accursed Welsh wars; and your Grace's over-sea doings; and building huge halls and castles, and fair dwellings, forsooth, for lurdane priests and joult-headed friars; and granting boons to all askers; and giving largesses as though your exchequer were a heaped mountain; I can tell ye, Sir King, moneys have grown rarer with us here in Winchester than unicorns' horns."

And, thus saying, the Procurator Fiscal vanished from the chamber.

"Command me, mighty Sovereign," said Du Coci, "whither must I the whilst this storm is brewing?"

"Northward," said Rufus, "as though a legion of fiends drove thee! or, by my Father's soul! lacking De Waleric for their fence, our towers of Monkchester-on-Tyne will fall into the rebels' hands."

"Past prayer, my Liege," replied the Knight, "for, if the black truth must out, they are already stormed and taken."

The Monarch stamped with a fury that shook the oaken chamber, and filled it with the dust of the strewed rushes. Fortunately, however, the sudden entrance of Montgomery and De Miles, whom the Justiciary had opportunely met in the castle-hall, broke upon his idle paroxysms. Immediately all were in their element. There was sparkling of fierce eyes; grasping of hands; swearing of bitter oaths; and rapid suggestion of measures better fitted for wreaking the royal anger than frantic words and gestures.

"For thy life, Du Coci," said Flambard, "ride thou with the Lord Marshal's hests, whither he bids, and see that twenty pursuivants-at-arms (less may not serve) be here in tabard and in saddle within an hour. Our writs to every Sheriff in the realm must fly with their best wings; or towns

and towers beyond the Trent will fall to the rebels by the round score, ere we have power a-foot to strike a stroke!"

"Write then, good Ranulph," said the King, "Dispatch —dispatch! Bid the stout Sheriffs ride day and night, and summon all 'twixt sixty and sixteen. If they slumber or tarry,—fire-brand and battle axe for that! God's curse upon the sleepy villains that lost our Castle-upon-Tyne! aye, and on thee, Du Coci, if thou amend not the evil chance with speed. Away! we will take thought to give thee needful force."

Sir Alberic hurried from the chamber. De Tunbridge and a few other of the higher crown-vassals, joined the royal military conclave; and, on the other hand, the Chamberlain, the Chancellor, and the Treasurer were summoned in aid of the toiling Flambard, whose active mind had already determined upon a hundred measures.

We pass to the Great Council, which, by the hour of noon, was assembled with a fulness that crowded even that vast hall to excess. Every Baron that the festival had drawn to Winchester, lay and spiritual, was there. No man caring or daring to be absent after a summons so peremptory. Instantly as the Monarch assumed his throne, a herald, upon the Marshal's right hand, blew three times a warning trumpet-note of proclamation, and then, another, upon the left, stepping a little in advance, announced in a loud voice the rebellion of De Mowbray and De Albemarle. A mixed sound of surprise and execration rose and swelled on every side, but, when the King, starting to his feet, demanded "What comfort and what counsel his loyal lieges gave him in such straits?" every lay-baron present, except two, followed the example of Montgomery and De Miles, who, suddenly, drawing their heavy swords, and waving them aloft, swore a deep oath, that "with those and their good lances alone they would give comfort and counsel to their Sovereign!"

"I go, my Liege," said the Marshal, "to fling abroad the first of a thousand banners; but, were ten lances the full muster of your battle against the high traitor, De Mowbray, one of the ten were I! So help me God and his liege-saint, St. George!"

"And I!" exclaimed the Constable.

"And I!" echoed De Tunbridge.

"And I!" broke in full concert from the assemblage; followed by a shout of acclamation which seemed to ring and vibrate along the bannered walls, and the carved roof-work of the hall.

"Now, by St. Luke's face! these are sounds for a King's ear and a King's heart; aye, and a King's thanks, were he the best and strongest that ever yet was bearded by rebellion! Thanks, therefore, my loyal and right-trusty lieges! But, look!—" he added, pointing to the two whom we have already alluded to as exceptions—"even in this goodly quiver there are broken shafts. Marshal of England, ask yonder Knights, if such they be, why they, and they alone, fling scorn upon our presence with shut lips, sheathed brands, and scowling brows? scorn upon us, we say, and every token of others' fealty. Bid them make answer, on their lives."

There was a dead silence, as Rufus, his eye kindling, though he retained his seat, continued to point alternately to the objects of his resentment; whom the general enthusiasm, indeed, now placed in strong and ungracious contrast with all around.

Montgomery strode midway between the parties malecontent; but they did not wait to be formally challenged.

"Marshal of England," said Hugh-le-Loup, his voice hoarse and tremulous with passion, "ask yonder King and his Justiciary, if it be sooth, that, at the banquet of yester-even, whither nor I nor mine were bidden guests, the hand and dowry of Maud de Aquila, my kinswoman and ward, were gaged, by a royal oath, as price and guerdon for De

Mowbray's head, struck off by whatsoever hand? Ask this and give me answer."

The words were scarcely uttered before Reginald de Lacy, upon his part also, confronted the Earl of Shrewsbury, and began with a like haughty formula,—

"Marshal of England, ask yonder King and his Justiciary, if it be sooth, that, in the list of towns in Normandy, marked out for grinding levies of men and arms—or, failing these, of such scutage-tax as would drain every coffer within their walls—my town of Mans be also written down? mine by the self-same right that seats his father's son upon yon throne of England. Ask this, and give me answer."

The audacity of these questions seemed literally to suspend the breath of all who heard. But the spirit of the Conqueror had boiled up in William Rufus.

"Now, by the Mother of Heaven!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet, "I am answered! and will make answer, were it the first and the last time that ever a true King answered a false traitor!—"

"Traitor!" cried Hugh-le-Loup, turning fiercely upon the Sovereign, "thy father, Sir King, thy mightier and more kingly father, had other speech and other bearing for one who was of the first and strongest to buckle mail, and scatter treasure, that a poor feudatory Duke might be transmewted into a free Monarch. But let pass. Sword nor treasure of mine shall out till I be answered touching this banquet boast. Is't sooth or not?"

The King, who, it is said, for the first time in his life, looked white with passion instead of red, strode up to the offended and offending Earl, and, with a glare which Lupus hardly sustained, replied from between his grinding teeth:—

"Sooth, thou audacious villain! sooth as Heaven! Art answered? ha? Why, we have pampered thee with gifts and favour till pride and swollen surquedry gorge thee to cracking! But, know, thou full-fed banqueter upon the

fruits of mine and my dead father's largesse, that I will yet work my pleasure with thee for good or evil; aye, as the potter with his clay, mould thee to what I list; and where, and when; thee, and thine earldom; treasure, and sword and life; thy gross body—" he added, scornfully, "and thy fair kinswoman! gnash fangs at that, Sir Wolf! For, as I live and breathe, the daughter of De Aquila is no more ward of thine than she is Queen of Heaven."

Rage and insulted pride seemed to dilate even the full portly dimensions of Hugh Vras.

"Now, afore God and his holy saints!" he exclaimed, "from the crown of thy head downward, and from the sole of thy foot upward, William of England! thou art, past thought and speech, a matchless tryant! if it stand thus with Maud de Aquila. . . . ."

"If!" vociferated the King, stamping furiously—"sound trumpets yet again!"

And, as the heralds obeyed, he strode heavily upon the steps of the throne, but without seating himself—then—as the peal of the horn died away—

"Here," he continued, "though tampering with rebellion hath barred thee from our banquets, here, at least, thou art a guest, bidden or unbidden; and here let thy own ears warn thee. Mark! He that shall bring the traitor De Mowbray's head,—hacked off, or still upon the rebel trunk, it recks not;—now, by my sceptre and my soul! on him (be he the meanest horse-boy of our camp!) on him will I bestow this vaunted beauty, this Maud de Aquila, for wife, for slave, or what not, even as his pleasure is! she, and her every knight's-fee, manor and tower, forest and field. Our Lord Justiciary, and thou, Earl Marshal, look that a herald-at-arms make proclamation thus, at every market cross and city gate."

The Earl of Chester struck with both hands clenched upon a brow literally black with contending passions; and it seemed to all present as if the violence of his emotions

must find speedy vent, either in execrations or tears. A struggle, fearful while it lasted, gave him mastery over both. Pacing slowly, but with little firmness, through the hall, he passed the King, the Marshal, and the Justiciary, and, taking from his baldric the sword which was given to him by the Conqueror, delivered it, without a word, into the hand of De Miles. As the constable received it with reluctant awkwardness, Lupus pointed to the inscription upon the blade, "Hugo comes Cestria," and then, with shaken finger, to the chafed Rufus, whose burning eye followed the gesture, well understanding it as a tacit renunciation of allegiance upon the Earl's part.

The latter, with recovered firmness of step, but looking deadly pale, then made for the hall door, saying to the Barons who thronged between,—

"I pray you let me pass;—this hall grows hot."

"Wouldst cool thee in the north;" said Rufus, "ha, Cousin Earl?"

"My Lord of Chester," said Flambard, speaking now for the first time, "is cousin also to De Albemarle; look well, my Liege, to that. If choice between be question of near blood, a sparrow's feather will turn the scale."

"Hell-born and bred!" exclaimed the Earl, "mine is indeed the blood of kings, and dost thou, mean, undescended caitiff! dare to lift finger or wag tongue against me?"

"Not,—" replied the sneering favourite, as he held before him the intercepted letter from De Mowbray, and pointed, insultingly, to the bitter passage—"'if thou canst leave turning and changing, and blowing hot and cold with the same breath, and looking now backward, now forward—' ha? mighty Earl!—"

The hand of Lupus was upon his dagger; but so also was the hand of another upon him, and a voice murmured, "Not yet, nor here—be calm."

He "looked daggers, but used none," and again moved for the door.

"Tarry," said the King, "and take again thy sword. Aye, and an oath upon its cross-hilt, under the beards of these holy bishops and abbots, that thou wilt meet us, in five days, with all thy power, levied both west and east of Offa's Dyke—"

The Earl indeed took back the sword, but it was only to throw it upon the lowest step of the throne; "I will meet thee, Cousin King," he said equivocally, "with all my power."

"Attach him of high treason," said the Justiciary, and the Marshal passed between Lupus and the door, but did not lay hand upon him, nor repeat the words of arrest; for there was that in the eyes of every Baron near, which admonished forbearance. The Earl of Chester, indeed, could draw no assurance or countenance from his own baronage of the Palatinate, the Great Council being formed exclusively of crown-tenants; but many of these had known him for a munificent friend, and shared the princely hospitality of Chester Castle. His cause, too, especially against the hated Flambard, was that of the whole body of English nobles, who, however loyally determined to support Rufus himself through the rebellion, were far from willing that the hand of regal prerogative should lie heavy upon one individual of their order.

"My Liege," said De Miles aloud, "this wound craves staunching; and not that your Justiciary should rend it wider. I, for one, will fight against De Mowbray while I have blood to shed, or flesh to hack; but these quillets of law—these matters of wardship, and of heirship, that stir your Grace against Hugh Lupus—these are targets beyond my archery; and, by holy Saint Mary! Sir Justiciary," (turning abruptly to Flambard,) "plainly, and at a word, I will back ye therein neither with sword nor speech."

There was a distinct buzz of approbation after this candid avowal. Some did not scruple to say aloud, "It is well said, noble Milo; by Mary-mother, we are like-minded

with the good Constable!" and there were grim smiles of satisfaction upon almost every face.

"I, also, my Liege," said Montgomery, willing enough to go with the stream, in spite of the glance of Rufus, "I also crave that this storm be overblown. Hugh Lupus is mine enemy; but so God help me, as I will not crush him with the hand of office till he be traitor manifest! If there be any amongst these noble peers whom I offend by this, let them pronounce, and I will bow me to their censure."

But there was not a single gainsaying voice.

Flambard, who, during all this, had placed one foot upon the lowest step of the throne, now murmured in the King's ear, "Let pass, my Liege, and be the shame on me." Then, aloud, "Pardon, great King; very hardly did I look for rebuke at your Grace's hand, nor that the voice of all your lieges should thus be surety for Hugh Lupus' faith; I pray God, their pledges be redeemed! and touching the hot words of arrest your Grace reproves me for, I say but as it is written, (if these holy bishops be well remembered,) 'The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.'"

He stretched his arm towards the Marshal, who, in his turn, waved for free passage to the Earl of Chester. All fell back with alacrity, to mark their triumph over the minister; and, with a measured step, without a single word of parting reverence, Hugh-le-Loup and Reginald de Lacy quitted the royal hall.

—ANON., *Rufus; or, the Red King.*

III

How Matilda Queen and Empress Treated Reading Abbey

NOW some of the baronage and clergy did send messengers into Anjou to invite the Empress Matilda into England, and to give her assurance good that they would place her upon the throne of her late father. And the ex-Empress, being a woman of a high spirit, did presently come over with her half-brother the Earl of Gloucester, and one hundred and forty knights; and the two nephews of the late Bishop Roger and many of the optimates did renounce their allegiance to King Stephen and join her standard. Bishop Nigel, who would have continued to hold the castle of Devizes if it had not been for that fearful fast, went into the Isle of Ely, his own diocese, and there amidst the bogs and fens, and on the very spot where Hereward the Lord of Brunn had withstood William the Conqueror, he raised a great rampart and collected a great force against Stephen. In other parts our bishops were seen mounted on war-horses, clad in armour, and directing in the battle or the siege: and many and bloody were the battles which were fought during two years, and until King Stephen was surprised and defeated in the great battle of Lincoln, and taken prisoner by the Earl of Gloucester, the half-brother of the Empress. Stephen was now thrown into a dungeon in Bristowe Castle, and his brother the Bishop of Winchester and legatus acknowledged the right and title of the Empress,

and led her in triumph to his cathedral church at Winchester, and there blessed all who should be obedient to her, and cursed all who should refuse to submit to her authority. And this being done, Stephen's brother, the bishop and legate aforesaid, did convene an assembly of churchmen to ratify her accession. At this synod the said legate bore testimony against his brother, and said that God had pronounced judgment against him ; and the great churchmen, to whom it chiefly belongs to elect kings and ordain them, did elect Matilda to fill the place which Stephen's demerits had vacated. Yet some of the clergy there who did not think that they could be so easily discharged of the oaths they had taken unto Stephen, or move so far in this matter without a direct command from our lord the pope, and many lords there were, as well of the laity as of the clergy, who did not like Matilda the better for knowing more of her. But not one felt more unhappy at these changes than our good lord abbat, who came back from the last meeting of the clergy at Winchester well nigh broken-hearted ; for, albeit he lamented his errors, he had much affection for King Stephen and great reverence to the obligations of an oath, and very earnestly desired peace and happiness to the country.

Affairs were in this state, and the flames of civil war were raging all round us, and the health of our good lord abbat was daily breaking more and more, when the Empress Matilda passed through Reading without stopping at our abbey to say an orison at her father's grave, being on her way to Westminster, there to be crowned and anointed by those who had crowned King Stephen only six years ago. But the citizens of London, who were very bold and powerful, loved Stephen more than Matilda, and before the coronation dresses could be got ready they rose upon her and drove her from the city, flying on horseback and at first almost alone, as she did. This time the daughter of the Beauclerc found it opportune to come to our abbey, for

she wanted food, lodging, and raiment, and knew not where else to procure them. A messenger on a foundered horse announced that she was coming, and by the time the man had put his beast into our lord abbat's stable, a great cloud of dust was seen rolling on the road beyond the Kennet from the eastward.

"*Medea fert tristes succos*—she is coming, and will bring poisons with her! She cometh in a whirlwind," said our good lord abbat, "and albeit she is her father's daughter—the lawfully begotten daughter of this house (though some men do say the contrary), it grieves me that she cometh at all. Last year, and at this same season of the year, we did lodge and entertain King Stephen, and prayed God to bless him; and now must I feast this wandering woman and cry God save Queen Matilda? The unlettered and rustical people be slow of comprehension, yet will they not have their hearts turned from us by seeing these rapid shiftings and changings? And so soon as the commoner sort lose their faith or belief in the principles of their betters, crime and havoc will have it all their own way. This people—this already mixed people of Saxons and Normans—will go backwards into blood, and there will be war between cottage and cottage as well as between castle and castle!"

The Empress-queen arrived at our gates, and with a numerous atrendance; for some had followed by getting stealthily out of London, and some had joined her on the road. Sooth to say she was an imperious, and despotical, and loud-voiced, manlike woman, and of a very imposing presence. Maugre her hasty flight she had a coronet of gold on her head, and a jewel like a star on her breast, and her garments were of purple and gold. A foreign lord, with a truculent countenance, bore a naked sword before her, and another knight, with a visage no less stern, carried a jewelled sceptre

"'Tis mine own father's house," said she as she came within our gates, "'tis the gift and doing of mine own

father, of blessed memory, and much, oh monks! did you wrong him and me by entertaining within these walls the foul usurper Stephen. The usurper is rotting in the nethermost dungeon of Bristowe Castle, and there let him die: but, oh abbat, lead me to my dear father's tomb, that I may say a prayer for the good of his soul; and see in the coining place what money thou hast in hand, for much do I lack money, and must for the nonce be a borrower! Bid thy people make ready a banquet in the hall, for we be all fasting and right hungry; and send into the township and call forth each man that hath a horse and a sword, in order that he may follow us to Oxenford, and help to be our guard upon the way. Do these few things, oh abbat, and I will yet hold thee in good esteem. The land rings with thy great wealth and power. By Notre Dame of Anjou! 'tis a goodly house, and the walls be strong, and the ditch round about broad and deep—by the holy visage of St. Luke! I will not hence to-night though all the rebel citizens of London, that do swarm like bees from their hives, should follow me so far."

Our good lord abbat could do little more than bow and cross himself, and our prior of the bellicose humour, who partook in our abbat's affection for King Stephen, reddened in the face and turned aside his face and grinded his teeth, and muttered down his own throat, "Beshrew the distaff! The Beauclerc, her sire, was more courteous unto clerks!"

Our sub-prior, being of a more supple nature, and being, moreover, not without his hopes of being nominated to the abbatial dignity so soon as our lord abbat should be laid under the chancel of the abbey church, kneeled before the Empress-queen, and then formed some of the monks *in processionale*, and began leading the way to the sepulchre of Henricus Primus. But this roused the abbat and threw the thoughts of our prior into another channel, and the lord abbat said in a grim and loud whisper unto the sub-prior, "I am chief here, and none must move without my

bidding"; and the prior said without an essay at a whisper, "Oh, sub, seek not to climb above *me*!"

The proud woman reddened and said, "If ye would honour me, oh monks, as your Queen, make haste to do it! An ye will not, I can get me in without your ceremonies. No time have I to lose, and money and aid must be forthcoming!"

Then up spake the lord abbat Edward and said in a loud voice, "Oh dread ladie, when that King of peace and lion of justice, *Rex pacis et leo justitiæ*, did found this house, he did give us his royal charter, wherein he said, 'Let no person, great or small, whether by violence or as a due custom, exact anything or take anything from the persons, lands, or possessions whatsoever belonging unto the monastery of Reading; nor levy any money, nor ask any tax for the building of bridges or castles, for carriages or for horses for carrying; nor lay any custom or subsidy, whether for shipmoney or tribute-money or for presents; nor . . .'"

"Oh abbat of the close fist," said Matilda, "I only want to borrow."

"But we may not lend without full consent of all our chapter monks in chapter assembled," quoth the prior.

"And the foundation charter of Henricus Primus," said our abbat, "recommends all the successors of the said royal founder to observe the charter as they wish for the divine favour and preservation, and pronounces a malediction upon any one that shall infringe or diminish his donations. Dread ladie, thou art the Beauclerc's daughter: the curse of a father is hard to bear!"

There was some whispering and sign-making among her followers; but the imperious woman said not a word: she only stretched out her right hand and pointed forward, into the interior of our abbey.

We now formed in more proper order and went through the church to the Beauclerc's grave, on the broad slab of

which there burned unceasing lamps, and sweet incense renewed every hour, and at the edge of which there was ever some brother of the house telling his beads and praying for the defunct King, the founder of the house. Dim was the spot, for death is darkness, and too much light suits ill with the decaying flesh and bones of mortal man, be he king or plough-hind; yet, as the Empress-queen entered, our acolytes touched the tips of three hundred and sixty-five tapers—sweet smelling tapers made of the wax brought from Gascony and Spain and Italie—and in an instant that dim sepulchral place was flooded with light, the converging rays meeting and shining brightest upon the black slab and the graven epitaph which began with the proud titles of the Beauclerc King, and which ended with that passage from holy writ which saith that all is vanity here below.

Matilda knelt and put her lips to that black slab (which she safely might do, for it was kept clear of all dirt and dust, it being the sole occupation of one of the lay brothers of our house to rub it every day and keep it clean), and she said an orison, of the shortest, and made some show of shedding tears; but then she quickly rose, and would have gone forth from the vault or cappella. But the lord abbat was not minded that the first visit paid by his daughter to the tomb of her father should pass off with so little ceremony and devotion; and, he himself taking the lead with his deep solemn voice, the Officium de Functorum, or Service for the Dead, was recited and chanted. The Empress-queen was somewhat awed and moved, and there seemed to be penitential tears in her eyes as we chaunted "Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur"; but at the last "requiem æternam" she flung away from the place and began to talk with a loud shrill voice of worldly affairs and of battles and sieges—for the royal-born woman had the heart of a warrior, and her grandfather the great Conqueror was not more ambitious or avid of dominion than she.

When we had well feasted Matilda and those who followed her in the abbat's apartment, we hoped she would be gone, for it was a long and fine day of June, well nigh upon the feast of St. John, and she well might have ridden half way to Oxenford before nightfall; but she soon gave the abbat to understand that she had no intention of going so soon. Without blushing she did ask how and where we monks could lodge her and her women for the night, telling us that she could not think of sleeping in the town, seeing that it was but poorly defended by walls and bulwarks. The abbat looked at the prior, and all the fathers looked at one another with astonishment, but the ungodly waiting-women, who came all from Anjou and other foreign parts, only smiled and simpered as they gazed at one another and observed our exceeding great confusion.

"In truth, royal dame," said our lord abbat, "it is against the rule of our order to lodge females within our walls."

"But I am your Queen, oh abbat," said Matilda, "and this is a royal abbey, and my sire founded it and endowed it! Have I not, as my father's daughter and lawful sovereign of this realm, the right to an exemption from the severity of your ordinances?"

"Ladie," quoth the abbat, "I will not that you have such right, or that the rule of St. Benedict is in any case to be set aside."

"But it hath been set aside," said Matilda, "and queens and their honourable damsels have slept in royal abbeys before now."

"That," quoth the abbat, "was before the Norman conquest, when, through the indolence, carelessness, and gluttony of the Saxon monks, the statutes of our order were generally ill observed."

"But I tell thee, oh stubborn monk, that I, the Empress-queen, that I, thy liege ladie Matilda, have slept and sojourned in half the abbeys and priories of England!"

"'Tis because of these civil wars which have so long raged to the destruction of all discipline and order, and to the utter undoing of this poor people of England! I, by the grace of God, abbat of Reading, would not shape my conduct after the pattern of some abbats and priors that be in this land, or willingly allow that which they perchance may have permitted without protest, and to the spiritual dishonour of their houses."

Here the eyes of the Empress-queen flashed fire, and wrathful and scornful was the voice with which she said unto our good lord abbat, in presence of most of the community:

"Shaveling, I am here, and will here tarry so long as it suits my occasions! I believe thy traitorous affection for my false cousin Stephen hath more to do with thine obstinacy than any reverence thou bearest to the rules of thine order. But, monk, 'tis too late! thou shouldest have kept thy gates closed! I and my maidens are within thy house, and these my faithful knights will see thee and thy brethren slain between the horns of the altar rather than see the Queen of England thrust out like a vagrant beggar from the abbey her own father founded!"

As the Empress-queen said these words the knights knit their brows and made a rattling with their swords. This did much terrify the major part of our community, and I, Felix, being then of a timorous nature, and a great lover of peace, as became my profession, did creep towards the door of the hall. But our prior spoke out with a right manful voice against the insults put upon our good abbat, telling the Empress-queen to her face that respect and reverence were due to the church even from the greatest of princes: that her father, of renowned and happy memory, would not so have treated the humblestservant of the church; and that if this unseemly business should be put to the issue of arms—if swords should be drawn over her royal father's grave—it might peradventure happen that the armed

"But our Prior spoke out with a right manful voice."

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retainers of the abbey would prove as good men as these outlandish knights, and that the fathers and brothers of the house would fight for their lives, as other servants of the church had ofttimes been constrained to do in these turbulent, lawless, ungodly days.

At this discourse of our bellicose prior the Empress-queen turned pale and her lip quivered, though more through wrath than fear, as it seemed to me; but her knights left off noising with their swords; and one of them, a native knight, spoke words of gentleness and accommodation, and put it as an entreaty rather than as a command, that the Queen should be allowed to infringe our rules for only one night.

"My conscience doth forbid it," said our lord abbat, "for it may be made a precedent, to the great injury and decay of our discipline. Therefore do I solemnly enter my protest against it. But as I would not see this holy house defiled by strife and blood, nor attempt a forcible expulsion, I will quit mine apartments."

And so saying, the lord abbat withdrew, and was followed by all of us. The Queen slept in the abbat's bed; her maidens on the rushes, which were carried into that chamber from the abbat's hall; and the knights and men-at-arms slept in the Aula Magna.

But before sleeping, the Empress-queen did many things, for it still wanted some hours of the Ave Maria, and many were the stormy thoughts that were working in her brain. Two of her knights we allowed to go out of the house by the postern gate, but farther ingress we granted to none; and not only did our armed retainers keep watch for us, but our monks, under the vigilant eye of the prior, did also keep watch and ward all through that evening and night, for we feared some extreme mischief; and it would not have failed to happen if Matilda had been enabled to get her partisans in greater force within the house. In truth, not many of our community knew that night what sleep

was. The materials for an abundant supper were furnished to the Empress-queen and her people; and some of these last were singing ungodly songs in the abbat's great hall when our church-bell tolled the midnight hour; yea, there was a noise of singing, and a running to and fro, and a squealing of womanly voices long after that, to the great sorrow and shame of the fathers of our house.

From all ungodly guests *libera nos!* Although they had feasted so late at night, the people of the Empress did make an early call for a matutinal refection; and our good chamberlain and coquinarius and cellarius were made to bestir themselves by times, and sundry of our lay brothers and servitors, to the great endangering of their souls, were made to run with viands and drink into our lord abbat's hall, and there wait upon the daughter of the Beauclerc and her foreign black-eyed damsels, who did shoot love-looks at them and discompose their monastic sobriety and gravity by laying their hands upon their sleeves and twitching their hoods for this thing and that (for the young Jezebels spoke no English), and by singing snatches of love songs at them, even as the false syrens of old did unto the wise Ulysses. Certes, the founder of our order, the blessed Benedict, did know what he was a-doing when he condemned and prohibited the resort of women to our houses and their in-dwelling with monks. Monks are mortal, and mortal flesh is weak: *et ne nos inducas in tentationem.*

It was still an early hour, not much more than half way between prima and tertia, when more troubles came upon us. The two knights who had been sent forth by the daughter of the Beauclerc to make an espial into the condition of the country, and to summon her friends unto her, returned to our gate with a large company of knights and men-at-arms, and demanded to be readmitted. Our good abbat, calling together the fathers of the house, held counsel with them; and it was agreed that to admit so great a company of men of war would be perilous to our com-

munity; and even our bellicose prior did opine that our people would be too few to protect the abbey if these men without should be joined to those the Empress had within. It was our prior who addressed that great company from the porter's window over the gateway, telling them that the two knights who had come from London with the Empress might be readmitted, but that our doors would not be unbarred even unto them unless the rest of that armed host went to a distance into the King's Mead. Hereat there arose a loud clamour from those knights and men-at-arms, with great reproaches and threats. Yea, one of those knights, Sir Richard à Chambre, who was in after time known for a most faithless man, and a variable, changing sides as often as the moon doth change her face, did call our lord abbat apostate monk and traitor, and did threaten our good house with storm and spoliation. The major part of us had gathered in front of the house to see and hear what was passing; but, alack! we were soon made to run towards the back of the abbey, for while Sir Richard à Chambre was discoursing in this unseemly strain, and shaking his mailed fist at the iron bars through which he could scantly see the tip of our prior's nose, a knight on foot, who wore black mail and a black plume in his casque, and who never raised his visor and scarce spoke word after these few, came running round the eastern angle of the abbey walls, shouting, "'Tis open! 'tis ours! Win in, in the name of Matilda!"

The voice that said these few words seemed to not a few of us to have been heard before, but we had no time to think of that. The armed host set up a shout, and ran round for our postern gate, which openeth upon the Kennet, and we all began to run for the same, our lord abbat wringing his hands, and saying, "The postern! the postern! Some traitor hath betrayed us!"

When we came into the paved quadrangle, we found some of our retainers hastily putting on their armour; but

when we came into the garden, we found it thronged with men already armed, and we saw the postern wide open and many more warriors rushing in through it: the evil men who had stayed with the Queen, and who had so much abused our hospitality, had already joined the new comers, and the united and still increasing force was so great that we could not hope to expel them and save our house from robbery and profanation. Our very prior smote his breast in despair. But our good abbat, though of a less bellicose humour, had no fear of the profane intruders, for he stood up in the midst of them and upbraided them roundly, and threatened to lay an interdict upon them all for the thing that they were doing. But anon the Empress herself came forth with one that waved a flag over her head, and at sight hereof the sinful men set up a shouting and fell to a kissing, some the flag, which was but a small and soiled thing, and some—on their knees—the hand of the Beauclerc's daughter; and while this was passing, those foreign damsels came salting and skipping, and clapping their hands and talking Anjou French, into the garden. There was one of them attired in a short green kirtle, that had the smallest and prettiest feet, and the largest and blackest eyes, and the longest and blackest eyelashes, and the laughingest face, that ever man did behold in these parts of the world; and she danced near to me on those tiny pretty feet, and glanced at me such glances from those black eyes, that my heart thumped against my ribs; but the saints gave me strength and protection, and I pulled my hood over my eyes and fell to telling my beads, and thus, when others were backsliders, I, Felix the novice, was enabled to stand steadfast in my faith.

The Empress had taken no heed of our lord abbat, or of any of us; but when she had done welcoming the knights that came to do her service, and, imprimis, to escort her on her way to Oxenford, she turned unto the abbat and said,—

"Monk, thou art too weak to cope with a Queen, the daughter of a King, the widow of an Emperor, and one from whom many kings will spring. But by thy perversity, which we think amounts to treason, thou hast incurred the penalty of deprivation; and when we have time for such matters, or at the very next meeting of a synod of bishops and abbats, I will see that thou art both deprived and imprisoned."

"That synod," said our abbat very mildly, "will not sit so soon, and from any synod I can appeal to his holiness the Pope."

"Fool!" quoth Matilda, with the ugliest curl of the lip I ever beheld; "obstinate fool! the Pope's legate is our well-beloved subject and friend, the Bishop of Winchester."

"See that you keep his allegiance! He hath put you upon a throne, and can pull you down therefrom!"

So spake our prior, who could not stomach the irreverent treatment the Countess of Anjou put upon his superior, and who knew that Matilda had in various ways broken her compact with him, and done deeds highly displeasing to King Stephen's brother, the tough-hearted Bishop of Winchester.

"Beshrew me!" quoth Matilda; "but these Reading monks be proud of stomach and rebellious! Sir Walleren of Mantes, drive them into their church, and see that they quit it not while we tarry here."

"I will," said the foreign knight; "and also will I see that they do sing the *Salve, Regina.*"

At this Sir Walleren and other unknightly knights drew their swords and called up their retainers; and before this ungodly host the abbat and prior and the monks were all compelled to retreat into the church, leaving the whole range of the abbey to those who had so unrighteously invaded it. But as soon as we were in the choir, instead of singing a *Salve, Regina*, we did chant *In te, Domine, speravi.*

A strong guard was put at the church-door and in the cloisters; but it was not needed, as we could oppose no resistance to those who were now robbing our house; and as it had been determined, therefore, that all who had come into the church should remain, with psalmody and prayer, until these men of violence should take their departure from the abbey, or complete their wickedness by driving us from it. As they ransacked our house as though it had been a castle taken by storm, and as they shouted and made such loud noises as soldiers use when a castle or a town has been successfully stormed, we only chanted the louder in the choir. For full two hours did these partisans of Matilda ransack the abbey, with none to say them nay. At the end of that time they had gotten all that they considered worth taking.

"And now," quoth the violent daughter of the Beauclerc, "let us ride on our way for Oxenford. Methinks we be now strong enough to defy all traitors on the road."

And she struck with her riding-wand the grey palfrey, which it much grieved our abbat to lose, and, followed by her knights and her leering and laughing foreign damsels, she rode out at our gate, and with a great host departed from Reading.

—C. Macfarlane, *A Legend of Reading Abbey*.

IV

The Queen at Fair Rosamond's Bower

QUEEN ELEANOR had just parted with the King previous to his embarkation; the tramp of his steed was fast dying upon her ear, and she stood in the same position as when she took her cold farewell of him. As the tramp of the charger's hoofs sounded more and more remote, she gradually raised herself from her musing position, until her whole figure became erect, and she stood with head elevated, and flashing eyes that glared with almost a savage fury. "He is gone," said she aloud, and after a long pause, "and will no longer interpose, like a shield between me and my vengeance: the hour of my revenge is at hand; nor will I delay the deed for which it hungers." She took up a small silver bell, and having rung it, her attendant, Oliphant Ugglethred, entered the apartment.

"Are all in readiness?" said Eleanor, in a bold and brief tone, and with a look that would well have become a commander on the eve of battle.

"All as your highness ordered," replied Ugglethred.

"And the Leech?" inquired Eleanor, her countenance changing as she spoke, "hast seen him, and——" she paused, as if afraid to finish the sentence.

"Obtained a phial of poison strong enough to kill Satan himself," said the ruffian; "better never entered the lip of Crusader or Saracen."

"Speak not so loud, lest we should be overheard," said Eleanor, casting her dark eyes cautiously around the apartment. "But how," added she, suddenly changing her mood after having walked to and fro in the apartment, "how shall we gain admittance to the palace of Woodstock?"

"They have no orders to keep out your highness," replied Oliphant, "as I learned from one who hath but little love for the minstrel, but, on the contrary, are to treat you as if nothing was amiss."

"Then to-morrow will we take up our abode at Woodstock," said the Queen, "and until then we leave all to thy management." So saying, she quitted the apartment.

The next day Eleanor arrived at the palace of Woodstock, and drawing up with her retinue, demanded entrance; while Oliphant Ugglethred with half a score of soldiers were stationed in an adjacent thicket. As the drawbridge was down, only the huge bars of the portcullis prevented the party from making good their entry; but a man-at-arms who was pacing to and fro within the gloomy postern, refused to raise the grated doorway without the governor's orders.

"The Queen of England demands admission, sirrah," said Eleanor, waving back the attendant who had in vain sued for entrance, and riding up to the strong fastness, "and unless the portcullis is instantly upraised, may doom you to waver over the battlements of the postern."

"Were it King Henry himself," replied the warrior, still pacing to and fro with the partisan in his hand, "he knows a sentinel's duty, and must bide the coming of the governor."

Meantime De Whycherly arrived, to whom the keeping of the palace was entrusted, and without further parley, ordered the Queen's instant admission, adding, "My orders extend not to the entry of your Highness' attendants."

"We take the command upon ourselves," replied Eleanor

haughtily ; and while she spoke, the horsemen, with Ugglethred at their head, drew up. "At least," added she, seeing that the knight was about to make some resistance, "so far as it regardeth our own attendants, I trust that your orders extend not to my followers."

"So far as it regardeth the time of watch—raising the drawbridge at sunset, and admitting none after that hour," said the knight, "my commands must be enforced during the King's absence."

"We shall not need to break your rules," replied Eleanor, glancing at Ugglethred ; "if we chance to prolong our sports beyond that period, we can return by the postern that faces the pleasance." So saying, she rode into the court-yard, and resigning her palfrey to an attendant, entered the hall of the palace.

Twice did Queen Eleanor attempt to reach the abode of Rosamond, but was unable to discover the right course through the labyrinth ; and even Ugglethred gave up the search in despair. Two days elapsed, and then they were able to explore the labyrinth.

Passage after passage did they traverse, Eleanor still leading the way with her garments disordered ; and she waved her torch to and fro—now to look down into some of those gloomy depths which had never been explored for ages ; then again to examine the distant darkness, and see if there was any outlet through the arched roof.

Suddenly the Queen rushed on holding the torch to the ground, and having gone back for some space, she again led the way, exclaiming with a shrill, savage laugh, which sounded awfully through the vaulted avenues, "She forgot to put up her silk before she departed ; and although she went somewhat quicker than a snail, yet here is her trail ! "

Ugglethred held his torch to the ground ;—it was even as she said,—Rosamond in her flight had dropped the clew of scarlet silk from her lap, and as one end was passed

through the sheath in her girdle, it became unwound, and at once betrayed her path.

There was now no further difficulty; the few menials who waited upon, and might yet have aided Rosamond, had flown to such hiding-places as were only known to themselves. Gamas Gobbo alone dared to show his teeth before them; but he, like a dog, kept barking and retreating, until one of the soldiers made a cut at him with his sword, and he fled before them.

True as a bloodhound to its track, did Eleanor follow the silken clue,—she came to the foot of the tower—it was still there:—step by step, like a silent guide, it pointed out the way;—there was no obstacle,—not an arm was uplifted to contest the passage. They entered the chief apartment, which was dark, until their torches broke the gloom, and before the images of Madonna and child, with clasped hands, and cheeks bedewed with tears, knelt fair Rosamond.

Eleanor stood for a few moments over her victim, like a dark thunder-cloud lowering above the goodly oak, before the bolt is launched that prostrates it for ever. As her tall figure drew nearer, the form of Rosamond seemed to shrink before it; like a dove burying itself in its nest, while the wings of the fierce hawk flap coldly above her.

She ventured to turn her head as she knelt,—it was an unconscious movement,—her eyes also raised themselves of their own accord,—it might be that she looked up towards Heaven; but there only glared the fiery comet that denoted death,—the revengeful countenance of Eleanor hung over her. She uttered a loud shriek, and fell upon the floor.

"Hast thou got the phial from Belton?" said Eleanor.

"It is there!" said Ugglethred, pointing to the table, without evincing the least emotion; "but she will need a goblet to quaff it from."

"Here is one," said Eleanor, taking a silver cup from a niche, and examining it minutely; "the very goblet," added

"And before the images of Madonna and Child knelt fair Rosamond."
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she, "which I gave to Henry in France, and in which I drank to him at our own nuptials:—cursed be the remembrance! But here is that which will sweeten the bitter draught," continued she, emptying the poison into the goblet; "rouse her, Ugglethred, to pledge the health of Henry of England."

"What would you with me?" said Rosamond, starting up wildly, and throwing her hair back; "what wrong have I done, that ye cast such menacing looks upon me? Whom have I injured, that ye seek to harm me?"

Eleanor drew her mantle back with one hand, and fixing her baleful glance upon her like the fabled basilisk, as if she would strike her dead with her eyes; while a cold-blooded scorn curled her haughty lips, and her nostrils dilated like that of a savage when he is said to smell the blood of his enemy, as she exclaimed, "Cunning harlot! I do but demean myself to waste a word upon thee. Is it nothing to step in between me and the affections of the King? to lay out thy allurements and wean him from his Queen?—to sow dissension in our bosoms, and cause him to leave the mighty affairs of his realms to hold dalliance with a strumpet like thyself? Couldst thou fly at none other game? Would none but a king suit thy dainty taste, to pinch and play with thy pallid cheeks? Poor pitiful wretch! I do thee too much honour to administer with my own hand the death that shall crown thy ambition."

"I am not what thou hast named me," said Rosamond in a low, but firm voice. "God is witness that I am not! that I have never sought to sow dissension between thee and his Highness; but that long before I heard of thy name, or knew——" she paused—buried her face in her hands, and added,—"Heaven knows my innocence!"

"What art thou then?—speak!" said Eleanor, springing forward and grasping her by the arm, and dragging her towards the light, with as much ease, as if she had but seized the wrist of a child. "Art thou his wife?—Down on

thy knees, and swear, by the Holy Virgin, that thou wert married to Henry before he knew me, and I will forgive thee. Bring me the damning proofs!" added she, her voice rising as she spoke, "and confirm it in the eyes of all England, and I will give thee such a dower as never fell to the share of a Norman daughter. Thou tremblest!" continued she, grasping her wrist tighter: "thy voice falters! thou liest!" and she drove her back with such force that Rosamond would have fallen had she not caught by the figure of the Madonna.

"Holy Virgin, protect me!" said Rosamond, folding her hands, and lifting up her beautiful eyes to Heaven, while her fair cheeks were pale as death; "grant me strength to endure this trial, then take me to thyself."

"There is some mystery in this affair," said Ugglethred, turning to Eleanor; "were it not better to await the return of the King, and confront them face to face?"

"Hold thy peace, fool," replied the angry Queen; "art thou also in league with Rosamond; and seekest to elude my vengeance by gaining time? No!" added she sternly, and seizing the goblet as she spoke, "her day of mercy is past. Here," continued she, holding the cup in one hand and brandishing the dagger in the other, "I give thee thy choice, drain me this goblet to the very dregs, or with my own hand I will let out thy lustful blood."

"Oh, have mercy on me!" exclaimed Rosamond, throwing herself on her knees, and laying hold of Eleanor's garment. "Thou art thyself a mother! oh, spare me for the sake of my children."

"Wert thou my daughter, I would show thee no mercy," replied the cruel Queen; "loose thy hold, viper! and implore me no longer, lest I set my heel upon all thy poisonous brood, and crush them as I would the eggs of a cockatrice. Answer me, wilt thou drink, or compel me to defile my hands with thy blood?"

"Oh, spare my life," continued Rosamond, still kneeling;

"let me not taste of death so young; leave me to end my days in the Nunnery of Godstow, and I will never look upon Henry's face again, never set foot beyond those sacred walls."

"Thy words will as soon remove the strong walls of this tower from their place as me from my purpose," replied Eleanor, her brow growing darker as she spoke. "I am no reed to be shaken by every ripple: hadst thou an hundred tongues to plead with, they should not save thy life. Thou shalt die! therefore, choose thy death instantly. I have nursed my revenge too long to abandon it at a moment like this."

"Grant me then a brief space for prayer," said Rosamond, in a more collected manner; "and may Heaven show you more mercy at the hour of death than you now extend to me."

"The moon is climbing above the dark trees," said Eleanor, glancing through the casement, and gazing on the bright orb of night, which was fast scaling the topmost branches. "When she hath past the highest bough, thou shalt die."

"Then is my hour indeed at hand," replied Rosamond, glancing at the sign, and without averting her face she folded her hands in prayer. Her lips moved, but still her eyes were fixed upon the moon; and although it arose calm and cloudless up a summer sky, thickly clustered with stars, yet never to her fancy did it make such speed, when sailing through the stormy heavens, it passed cloud after cloud like an arrow. She tried in vain to pray. She remembered the days when she had gazed through the same casement awaiting the return of Henry. Then her memory flew to her father's castle. She tried in vain to pray. The remembrance of other days came gushing upon her heart, and she fell with her face upon the floor, and wept bitterly.

Eleanor also watched with impatience the rising orb;

half her disk already stood bold and bare upon the brow of Heaven, making the deep blue of night around her look darker. But the Queen's face still retained the same cold, cruel expression ; not a cloud had faded from her brow ;—her compressed lips and steady eye told that she was firm to her purpose.

"It is time," said Eleanor, in a voice which, like the sound of the last trumpet, when it shall awaken the dead, caused Rosamond to spring instantly upon her feet, and, without uttering a word, she held out her arm for the goblet. With steady hand and fixed eye, and such a look as would have driven the blood back into the boldest heart, did Eleanor deliver the cup to her trembling victim. Rosamond held it in her hand for a moment, uplifted her eyes to Heaven, while her lips were seen to move, she then closed them—drained the cup to the dregs,—and uttering a deep groan, fell upon the floor.

—T. MILLER, *Fair Rosamond.*

V

How the Queen of the Forest met the King of the Land

ROBIN and Marian dwelt and reigned in the forest, ranging the glades and the greenwoods from the matins of the lark to the vespers of the nightingale, and administering natural justice according to Robin's ideas of rectifying the inequalities of human condition: raising genial dews from the bags of the rich and idle, and returning them in fertilising showers on the poor and industrious: an operation which more enlightened statesmen have happily reversed, to the unspeakable benefit of the community at large. The light footsteps of Marian were impressed on the morning dew beside the firmer step of her lover, and they shook its large drops about them as they cleared themselves a passage through the thick tall fern, without any fear of catching cold, which was not much in fashion in the twelfth century. Robin was as hospitable as Cathmor; for seven men stood on seven paths to call the strangers to his feast. It is true, he superadded the small improvement of making the stranger pay for it: than which what could be more generous? For Cathmor was himself the prime giver of his feast, whereas Robin was only the agent to a series of strangers, who provided in turn for the entertainment of their successors; which is carrying the disinterestedness of hospitality to its acme. Marian often killed the deer,

> Which Scarlet dressed, and Friar Tuck blessed,
> While Little John wandered in search of a guest.

Robin was very devout, though there was great unity in his religion: it was exclusively given to our Lady the Virgin, and he never set forth in a morning till he had said three prayers, and had heard the sweet voice of his Marian singing a hymn to their mutual patroness. Each of his men had, as usual, a patron saint according to his name or taste. The friar chose a saint for himself, and fixed on Saint Botolph, whom he euphonised into Saint Bottle, and maintained that he was that very Panomphic Pantagruelian saint well known in ancient France as a female divinity by the name of La Dive Bouteille, whose oracular monosyllable, "Trincq," is celebrated and understood by all nations, and is expounded by the learned doctor Alcofribas, who has treated at large on the subject, to signify "drink." Saint Bottle, then, was the saint of Friar Tuck, who did not yield even to Robin and Marian in the assiduity of his devotions to his chosen patron. Such was their summer life, and in their winter caves they had sufficient furniture, ample provender, store of old wine, and assuredly no lack of fuel, with joyous music and pleasant discourse to charm away the season of darkness and storms.

Many moons had waxed and waned, when on the afternoon of a lovely summer day a lusty, broad-boned knight was riding through the forest of Sherwood. The sun shone brilliantly on the full green foliage, and afforded the knight a fine opportunity of observing picturesque effects, of which it is to be feared he did not avail himself. But he had not proceeded far before he had an opportunity of observing something much more interesting, namely a fine young outlaw leaning, in the true Sherwood fashion, with his back against a tree. The knight was preparing to ask the stranger a question, the answer to which, if correctly given, would have relieved him from a doubt that pressed heavily on his mind, as to whether he was in the right road or the wrong, when the youth prevented the inquiry by saying: "In God's name, sir knight, you are late to your

"Leaning in true Sherwood fashion, with his back against a tree."

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meals. My master has tarried dinner for you these three hours."

"I doubt," said the knight, "I am not he you wot of. I am nowhere bidden to-day, and I know none in this vicinage."

"We feared," said the youth, "your memory would be treacherous: therefore am I stationed here to refresh it."

"Who is your master?" said the knight; "and where does he abide?"

"My master," said the youth, "is called Robin Hood, and he abides hard by."

"And what knows he of me?" said the knight.

"He knows you," answered the youth, "as he does every wayfaring knight and friar, by instinct."

"Gramercy," said the knight; "then I understand his bidding: but how if I say I will not come?"

"I am enjoined to bring you," said the youth. "If persuasion avail not, I must use other argument."

"Say'st thou so?" said the knight; "I doubt if thy stripling rhetoric would convince me."

"That," said the young forester, "we will see."

"We are not equally matched, boy," said the knight. "I should get less honour by thy conquest, than grief by thy injury."

"Perhaps," said the youth, "my strength is more than my seeming, and my cunning more than my strength. Therefore let it please your knighthood to dismount."

"It shall please my knighthood to chastise thy presumption," said the knight, springing from his saddle.

Hereupon, which in those days was usually the result of a meeting between any two persons anywhere, they proceeded to fight.

The knight had in an uncommon degree both strength and skill: the forester had less strength, but not less skill than the knight, and showed such a mastery of his weapon as reduced the latter to great admiration.

They had not fought many minutes by the forest clock, the sun; and had as yet done each other no worse injury than that the knight had wounded the forester's jerkin, and the forester had disabled the knight's plume; when they were interrupted by a voice from a thicket, exclaiming, "Well fought, girl: well fought. Mass, that had nigh been a shrewd hit. Thou owest him for that, lass. Marry, stand by, I'll pay him for thee."

The knight turning to the voice, beheld a tall friar issuing from the thicket, brandishing a ponderous cudgel.

"Who art thou?" said the knight.

"I am the church militant of Sherwood," answered the friar. "Why art thou in arms against our lady queen?"

"What meanest thou?" said the knight.

"Truly, this," said the friar, "is our liege lady of the forest, against whom I do apprehend thee in overt act of treason. What sayest thou for thyself?"

"I say," answered the knight, "that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long."

"Spoken," said the friar, "like one who hath done execution. Hast thou thy stomach full of steel? Wilt thou diversify thy repast with a taste of my oak-graff? Or wilt thou incline thine heart to our vension, which truly is cooling? Wilt thou fight? or wilt thou dine? or wilt thou fight and dine? or wilt thou dine and fight? I am for thee, choose as thou mayest."

"I will dine," said the knight; "for with lady I never fought before, and with friar I never fought yet, and with neither will I ever fight knowingly: and if this be the queen of the forest, I will not, being in her own dominions, be backward to do her homage."

So saying, he kissed the hand of Marian, who was pleased most graciously to express her approbation.

"Gramercy, sir knight," said the friar, "I laud thee for thy courtesy, which I deem to be no less than thy valour. Now do thou follow me, while I follow my nose, which

THE CHURCH MILITANT OF SHERWOOD.

scents the pleasant odour of roast from the depth of the forest recesses. I will lead thy horse, and do thou lead my lady."

The knight took Marian's hand, and followed the friar, who walked before them, singing:

> When the wind blows, when the wind blows
> From where under buck the dry log glows,
> What guide can you follow,
> O'er break and o'er hollow,
> So true as a ghostly, ghostly nose?

They proceeded, following their infallible guide, first along a light elastic greensward under the shade of lofty and widespreading trees that skirted a sunny opening of the forest, then along labyrinthine paths, which the deer, the outlaw, or the woodman had made, through the close shoots of the young coppices, through the thick undergrowth of the ancient woods, through beds of gigantic fern that filled the narrow glades and waved their green feathery heads above the plume of the knight. Along these sylvan alleys they walked in single file; the friar singing and pioneering in the van, the horse plunging and floundering behind the friar, the lady following "in maiden meditation fancy-free," and the knight bringing up the rear, much marvelling at the strange company into which his stars had thrown him. Their path had expanded sufficiently to allow the knight to take Marian's hand again, when they arrived in the august presence of Robin Hood and his court.

Robin's table was spread under a high overarching canopy of living boughs, on the edge of a natural lawn of verdure, starred with flowers, through which a swift transparent rivulet ran, sparkling in the sun. The board was covered with abundance of choice food and excellent liquor, not without the comeliness of snow-white linen and the splendour of costly plate, which the sheriff of Nottingham had unwillingly contributed to supply, at the same time with an excellent cook, whom Little John's art had spirited

away to the forest with the contents of his master's silver scullery.

An hundred foresters were here assembled, overready for their dinner, some seated at the table and some lying in groups under the trees.

Robin made courteous welcome to the knight, who took his seat between Robin and Marian at the festal board; at which was already placed one strange guest in the person of a portly monk, sitting between little John and Scarlet, with his rotund physiognomy elongated into an unnatural oval by the conjoint influence of sorrow and fear: sorrow for the departed contents of his travelling treasury, a good-looking valise which was hanging empty on a bough; and fear for his personal safety, of which all the flasks and pasties before him could not give him assurance. The appearance of the knight, however, cheered him up with a semblance of protection, and gave him just sufficient courage to demolish a cygnet and a numble-pie, which he diluted with the contents of two flasks of canary sack.

But wine, which sometimes creates and often increases joy, doth also, upon occasion, heighten sorrow: and so it fared now with our portly monk, who had no sooner explained away his portion of provender, than he began to weep and bewail himself bitterly.

"Why dost thou weep, man?" said Robin Hood. "Thou hast done thine embassy justly, and shalt have thy Lady's grace."

"Alack! alack!" said the monk: "no embassy had I, luckless sinner, as well thou wottest, but to take to my abbey in safety the treasure whereof thou hast despoiled me."

"Propound me his case," said Friar Tuck, "and I will give him ghostly counsel."

"You well remember," said Robin Hood, "the sorrowful knight, who dined with us here twelve months and a day gone by"

"Well do I," said Friar Tuck. "His lands were in jeopardy with a certain abbot, who would allow no longer day for their redemption. Whereupon you lent to him the four hundred pounds which he needed, and which he was to repay this day, though he had no better security to give than our Lady the Virgin."

"I never desired better," said Robin, for she never yet failed to send me my pay; and here is one of her own flock, this faithful and well-favoured monk of St. Mary's, hath brought it me duly, principal and interest to a penny, as Little John can testify, who told it forth. To be sure, he denied having it, but that was to prove our faith. We sought and found it."

"I know nothing of your knight," said the monk: "and the money was our own, as the Virgin shall bless me."

"She shall bless thee," said Friar Tuck, "for a faithful messenger."

The monk resumed his wailing. Little John brought him his horse. Robin gave him leave to depart. He sprang with singular nimbleness into the saddle, and vanished without saying, God give you good day.

The stranger knight laughed heartily as the monk rode off.

"They say, sir knight," said Friar Tuck, "they should laugh who win: but thou laughest who art likely to lose."

"I have won," said the knight, "a good dinner, some mirth, and some knowledge: and I cannot lose by paying for them."

"Bravely said," answered Robin. "Still it becomes thee to pay: for it is not meet that a poor forester should treat a rich knight. How much money hast thou with thee?"

"Troth, I know not," said the knight. "Sometimes much, sometimes little, sometimes none. But search, and what thou findest keep: and for the sake of thy kind heart and open hand, be it what it may, I shall wish it were more."

"Then, since thou sayest so," said Robin, "not a penny will I touch. Many a false churl comes hither, and disburses against his will: and till there is lack of these, I prey not on true men."

"Thou art thyself a true man, right well I judge, Robin," said the stranger knight, "and seemest more like one bred in court than to thy present outlaw life."

"Our life," said the friar, "is a craft, an art, and a mystery. How much of it, think you, could be learned at court?"

"Indeed, I cannot say," said the stranger knight: "but I should apprehend very little."

"And so should I," said the friar: "for we should find very little of our bold open practice, but should hear abundance of praise of our principles. To live in seeming fellowship and secret rivalry; to have a hand for all, and a heart for none; to be everybody's acquaintance, and nobody's friend; to meditate the ruin of all on whom we smile, and to dread the secret stratagems of all who smile on us; to pilfer honours and despoil fortunes, not by fighting in daylight, but by sapping in darkness: these are arts which the court can teach, but which we, by 'r Lady, have not learned. But let your court minstrel tune up his throat to the praise of your court hero, then come our principles into play: then is our practice extolled: not by the same name, for their Richard is a hero, and our Robin is a thief: marry, your hero guts an exchequer, while your thief disembowls a portmanteau; your hero sacks a city, while your thief sacks a cellar: your hero marauds on a larger scale, and that is all the difference, for the principle and the virtue are one: but two of a trade cannot agree: therefore your hero makes laws to get rid of your thief, and gives him an ill name that he may hang him: for might is right, and the strong make laws for the weak, and they that make laws to serve their own turn do also make morals to give colour to their laws."

"Your comparison, friar," said the stranger, "fails in this: that your thief fights for profit, and your hero for honour. I have fought under the banners of Richard, and if, as you phrase it, he guts exchequers, and sacks cities, it is not to win treasure for himself, but to furnish forth the means of his greater and more glorious aim."

"Misconceive me not, sir knight," said the friar. "We all love and honour King Richard, and here is a deep draught to his health: but I would show you, that we foresters are miscalled by opprobrious names, and that our virtues, though they follow at humble distance, are yet truly akin to those of Cœur-de-Lion. I say not that Richard is a thief, but I say that Robin is a hero: and for honour did ever yet man, miscalled thief, win greater honour than Robin? Do not all men grace him with some honourable epithet? The most gentle thief, the most courteous thief, the most bountiful thief, yea, and the most honest thief. Richard is courteous, bountiful, honest, and valiant, but so also is Robin: it is the false word that makes the unjust distinction. They are twin spirits, and should be friends, but that fortune hath differently cast their lot; but their names shall descend together to the latest days, as the flower of their age and of England; for in the pure principles of freebootery have they excelled all men; and to the principles of freebootery, diversely developed, belong all the qualities to which song and story concede renown."

"And you may add, friar," said Marian, "that Robin, no less than Richard, is king in his own dominion; and that if his subjects be fewer, yet are they more uniformly loyal."

"I would, fair lady," said the stranger, "that thy latter observation were not so true. But I nothing doubt, Robin, that if Richard could hear your friar, and see you and your lady as I now do, there is not a man in England whom he would take by the hand more cordially than yourself."

"Gramercy, sir knight," said Robin——But his speech was cut short by Little John calling, "Hark!"

All listened. A distant trampling of horses was heard. The sounds approached rapidly, and at length a group of horsemen glittering in holiday dresses was visible among the trees.

"God's my life!" said Robin, "what means this? To arms, my merrymen all."

"No arms, Robin," said the foremost horseman, riding up and springing from his saddle. "Have you forgotten Sir William of the Lee?"

"No, by my fay," said Robin: "and right welcome again to Sherwood."

Little John bustled to re-array the disorganized economy of the table, and replace the dilapidations of the provender.

"I come late, Robin," said Sir William, "but I came by a wrestling, where I found a good yeoman wrongfully beset by a crowd of sturdy varlets, and I staid to do him right."

"I thank thee for that, in God's name," said Robin, "as if thy good service had been to myself."

"And here," said the knight, "is thy four hundred pounds; and my men have brought thee an hundred bows and as many well-furnished quivers, which I beseech thee to receive and to use as a poor token of my grateful kindness to thee: for me and my wife and children didst thou redeem from beggary."

"The bows and arrows," said Robin, "will I joyfully receive: but of thy money, not a penny. It is paid already. My Lady, who was thy security, hath sent it me for thee."

Sir William pressed, but Robin was inflexible.

"It is paid," said Robin, "as this good knight can testify, who saw my Lady's messenger depart but now."

Sir William looked round to the stranger knight, and instantly fell on his knees, saying, "God save King Richard."

The foresters, friar and all, dropped on their knees together, and repeated in chorus: "God save King Richard."

"Rise, rise," said Richard, smiling: "Robin is king here, as his lady hath shown. I have heard much of thee, Robin, both of thy present and thy former state. And this, thy fair forest-queen, is, if tales say true, the Lady Matilda Fitzwater."

Marian signed acknowledgment.

"Your father," said the King, "has approved his fidelity to me, by the loss of his lands, which the newness of my return, and many public cares, has not yet given me time to restore: but this justice shall be done to him, and to thee also, Robin, if thou wilt leave thy forest-life and resume thy earldom, and be a peer of Cœur-de-Lion: for braver heart and juster hand I never yet found."

Robin looked round on his men.

"Your followers," said the King, "shall have free pardon, and such of them as thou wilt part with shall have maintenance from me; and if ever I confess to priest, it shall be to thy friar."

"Gramercy to your majesty," said the friar; "and my inflictions shall be flasks of canary; and if the number be (as in grave cases I may, peradventure, make it) too great for one frail mortality, I will relieve you by vicarious penance, and pour down my own throat the redundancy of the burden."

Robin and his followers embraced the King's proposal. A joyful meeting soon followed with the baron and Sir Guy of Gamwell: and Richard himself honoured with his own presence a formal solemnization of the nuptials of our lovers, whom he constantly distinguished with his peculiar regard.

The friar could not say, Farewell to the forest, without something of a heavy heart: and he sang as he turned his back upon its bounds, occasionally reverting his head:

Ye woods, that oft at sultry noon
Have o'er me spread your massy shade :
Ye gushing streams, whose murmured tune
Has in my ear sweet music made,
While, where the dancing pebbles show
Deep in the restless mountain-pool
The gelid water's upward flow,
My second flask was laid to cool :

Ye pleasant sights of leaf and flower :
Ye pleasant sounds of bird and bee :
Ye sports of deer in sylvan power :
Ye feasts beneath the greenwood tree :
Ye baskings in the vernal sun :
Ye slumbers in the summer dell :
Ye trophies that this arm has won :
And must you hear your friar's farewell ?

But the friar's farewell was not destined to be eternal. He was domiciled as the family confessor of the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, who led a discreet and courtly life, and kept up old hospitality in all its munificence, till the death of King Richard and the usurpation of John, by placing their enemy in power, compelled them to return to their greenwood sovereignty ; which, it is probable, they would have before done from choice, if their love of sylvan liberty had not been counteracted by their desire to retain the friendship of Cœur-de-Lion. Their old and tried adherents, the friar among the foremost, flocked again round their forest-banner ; and in merry Sherwood they long lived together, the lady still retaining her former name of Maid Marian, though the appellation was then as much a misnomer as that of Little John.

—Thomas Love Peacock, *Maid Marian.*

VI

King and Queen at Court

THE King kept state with the Earl of Cornwall, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Lincoln, Henry de Wernham, his chaplain, who also had the custody of the Great Seal, the Earl of Norfolk, the Earl of Hereford, and a number of other nobles of the realm ; but the Queen kept her state apart.

The King's great chamber was marvellous to behold. There were twenty-five wax-lights held by esquires of the household, all in the King's livery, gentils as they were ; also twenty-five wax torches were fixed high up over the tapestry. The walls were gorgeous with the story of Troy-town in ancient tapestries.

There were, that night, playing in the chamber, the King's twelve minstrels, all clothed, for his honour and dignity, in sumptuous livery, with their virger to order their pipings and blowings. There were, besides, the children of the chapel singing, at times, from the brown gallery ; so that, the doors being open, you might have heard them through all that side of the castle ; and those, who sat afar off in the great hall, needed none other music.

There also was Maister Henry, the versifier, whose ballad of the Giant of Cornwall was this night rehearsed to the harp by Richard, the King's harper, as was his famous Chronicle of Charlemagne, which lasted till his Highness was well-nigh weary, when he jocularly called out, having

tasted of his golden cup, that Henry should have a butt of wine with his wages, if he would shorten his ballads by one-half.

That night, the King played at "Checkere" with the Earl of Norfolk, on a board laid with jasper and chrystal, the checkmen being of the same. Some said the kings and queens were of ebony, studded over with jewels, but of this I know not.

But, the finest sight of all was the going of the chamberlain to the cupboard, accompanied of three nobles of the highest estate in the realm that were there present (save the King's family), to receive the King's cup and spice-plates; and then the bringing up of the voide before his Highness. And, first, the usher, having assembled the King's sewers, their towels about their necks, with the four esquires of the body and the knights and esquires of the household, to the number of seventeen; these, with divers other officers, being met at the cupboard, the Chamberlain took the King's towel, and, having kissed it, as the custom is, delivered it to the Earl of Norfolk, he being of the highest estate, who reverently received the same, and laid it safely upon his shoulder. Then the said chamberlain gave the gold spice-plates covered to the Earl of Hereford; and then the King's cup of massive gold, covered also, to the Earl of Warwick. At the same time were given to the knights of the household the Archbishop's spice-plate and cup, covered also, to be carried up by the space of one minute after the King's.

And, certes, it was a goodly sight to see all these nobles and gentils marching up the great chamber (the minstrels playing the while), compassed about with esquires, bearing great lights to the number of thirteen, especial care being taken, as the manner all times has been at the voide, that the lights were odd in number.

When this array drew near to the King, he, standing up under his cloth of estate, which was rolled up high, with the young Prince Edward on one hand and the Archbishop

on the other, the Chamberlain taking the covers from off the spice-plates, gave assaye unto the Earl of Gloucester. The King, before he took his spice, made a beck to the Archbishop, that he should take his first; and the knights having advanced, as they well knew would be seemly, the Archbishop forthwith obeyed.

But, when the Chamberlain uncovered the cup, all the minstrels in the chamber blew up louder than ever, and so held on till his Highness took the ypocras, so that every roof in the castle rung with joy.

The King and Archbishop being served, his Highness's cup and spice-plates were again covered, but not so the Archbishop's. Then were the spice and cup carried to Prince Edward and the Earl of Cornwall, by the knights; to the bishops by the esquires of the household, and to the other estates by the esquires also. Which being done, his Highness forthwith departed for "all night," the trumpets blowing before him. Then, were three healths drunk, one to the King, one to the Queen, and one to the Prince Edward; after which it were not meet that the assemblage should remain, and straight the great chamber was avoyded of all there present.

The Queen that night sat in her bower with all her ladies. There were mynstrelsy and dancing to the harp and viol. The Lady Barbara was the marveil of all, that beheld her moving to the sound of viols like unto some sprite, rather than to a poor mortal. Prince Edward danced with her a round, and the Queen often honoured her with her pleasing speech.

The dancing being ended, Pierre, a Norman and the Queen's chief minstrel, apparelled in the guise of his country, sang some of his ballads on the harp, in his own tongue, which, albeit were they not esteemed like unto Maister Henry's, yet did they not displease. But belike, if his Highness had been there at first, he would have bidden him to shorten his ballad by one-half.

A more pleasureful sight could not be than the Queen's bower, as it was at that time, where she sat in estate, under a cloth of gold, her ladies standing about her chair, and her maidens on either hand, below the steps of her throne; and two young damsels of surpassing beauty and richly bedight, sitting on the first step at her feet; the same that were used so to sit when her Highness kept state in the great hall at festivals.

The arched roof was curiously wrought in that fashion which King Henry had newly brought into favour; and, besides these lights, a great crystal lamp that hung from the roof shone over the chamber and upon the goodly assemblage, as they looked upon the Lady Barbara, passing so winningly in the dance. That night the Earl of Richmond bore the Queen's spice-plate, and Sir Philip de Kinton her cup.

When the Lady Barbara had ended her dance, the Queen called her to her chair; and, making her take of the sweetmeats from her own plate, spoke commendable words to her, as did his Highness King Henry. Then the Queen, turning to the Lady Gloucester, took from her hands a girdle, richly beset with jewels, and, clasping it on the Lady Barbara, kissed her, and bade her wear it ever, for her sake and for her honour. Her Highness then stretched out her hand to Sir Gaston, who, kneeling, put it to his lips. "May you, sir knight," said her Highness, "as well deserve this lady, as she deserves this token of my regard!"

Then the King said many gracious things, and seemed so merry of heart, that he made all around him gladsome; till, the voide being ended, he went forth with the Queen, the trumpets blowing before them; and the chamber was then speedily avoided for all night.

—Mrs. Ratcliffe. *Gaston de Blondeville.*

VII

For Wallace or for King Edward

WALLACE drew up his army in order for the new battle near a convent of Cistercian monks, on the narrow plain of Dalkeith. The two rivers Esk, flowing on each side of the little phalanx, formed a temporary barrier between it and the pressing legions of De Warenne. The earl's troops seemed countless, while the Southron lords who led them on, being elated by the representations which had been given to them of the disunited state of the Scottish army, and the consequent dismay which had seized their hitherto all-conquering commander, bore down upon the Scots with an impetuosity which threatened their universal destruction.

The sky was obscured; an awful stillness reigned through the air, and the spirits of the mighty dead seemed leaning from their clouds, to witness this last struggle of their sons. Fate did indeed hover over the opposing armies. She descended on the head of Wallace, and dictated from amidst his waving plumes. She pointed his spear, she wielded his flaming sword, she charged with him in the dreadful shock of battle. De Warenne saw his foremost thousands fall. He heard the shouts of the Scots, the cries of his men, and the plains of Stirling rose to his remembrance. He, descending the hill to lead forward himself, was met and almost overwhelmed by his flying troops; horses without riders, men without shield or sword, but all in dismay

rushed past him. He called to them, he waved the royal standard, he urged, he reproached, he rallied, and led them back again. The fight recommenced. Long and bloody was the conflict. De Warenne fought for conquest, and to recover a lost reputation. Wallace contended for his country; and to show himself always worthy of her latest blessing "before he should go hence, and be no more seen."

The issue declared for Scotland. But the ground was covered with the slain, and Wallace chased a wounded foe with troops which dropped as they pursued. At sight of the melancholy state of his intrepid soldiers, he tried to check their ardour, but in vain. "It is for Wallace that we conquer!" cried they; "and we die, or prove him the only captain in this ungrateful country!"

Night compelled them to halt; and while they rested on their arms, Wallace was satisfied that he had destroyed the power of De Warenne.

The splendour of this victory struck to the souls of the council of Stirling; but with no touch of remorse. Scotland being again rescued from the vengeance of her implacable foe, the disaffected lords in the citadel affected to spurn at her preservation, declaring to the Regent that they would rather bear the yoke of the veriest tyrant in the world than owe a moment of freedom to the man who (they pretended to believe) had conspired against their lives. And they had a weighty reason for this decision: though De Warenne was beaten, his wife was a victor. She had made Edward triumphant in the venal hearts of her kinsmen; gold, and her persuasions, with promises of future honours from the King of England, had sealed them entirely his. All but the Regent were ready to commit everything into the hands of Edward. The rising favour of these other lords with the court of England induced him to recollect that he might rule as the unrivalled friend of Bruce, should that prince live; or, in case of his death, he

might have it in his own power to assume the Scottish throne untrammelled. These thoughts made him fluctuate, and his country found him as undetermined in treason as unstable in fidelity.

Immediately on the victory at Dalkeith, Kirkpatrick (eager to be the first communicator of such welcome news to Lennox, who had planted himself as a watch at Stirling) withdrew secretly from Wallace's camp; and hoping to move the gratitude of the refractory lords, entered full of honest joy into the midst of their council.

He proclaimed the success of his commander. His answer was accusation and insult. All that had been charged against the too fortunate Wallace was re-urged with added acrimony. Treachery to the State, hypocrisy in morals, fanaticism in religion—no stigma was too extravagant, too contradictory, to be affixed to his name. They who had been hurt in a recent fray in the hall, pointed to their still smarting wounds, and called upon Lennox to say if they did not plead against so dangerous a man.

"Dangerous to your crimes, and ruinous to your ambition!" cried Kirkpatrick; "for so help me God, as I believe, that an honester man than Sir William Wallace lives not in Scotland, and that ye know! And his virtues overtopping your littleness, ye would uproot the greatness which ye cannot equal."

This speech, which a burst of indignation had wrested from him, brought down the wrath of the whole party upon himself. Lord Athol, yet stung with his old wound, furiously struck him; Kirkpatrick drew his sword, and the two chiefs commenced a furious combat, each determined on the extirpation of the other. Gasping with almost the last breathing of life, neither could be torn from their desperate revenge, till many were hurt in attempting to separate them; and then the two were carried off insensible and covered with wounds.

When this sad news was transmitted to Sir William

Wallace, it found him on the banks of the Esk, just returned from the citadel of Berwick, where, once more master of that fortress, he had dictated the terms of a conqueror and a patriot.

In the scene of his former victories, the romantic shades of Hawthorndean, he now pitched his triumphant camp, and from its verdant bounds despatched the requisite orders to the garrison castles on the borders. While employed in this duty, his heart was wrung by an account of the newly aroused storm in the citadel of Stirling; but as some equivalent, the chieftains of Midlothian poured in to him on every side; and acknowledging him their protector, he again found himself the idol of gratitude, and the almost deified object of trust. At such a moment, when with one voice they were disclaiming all participation in the insurgent proceedings at Stirling, another messenger arrived from Lord Lennox, to conjure him, if he would avoid open violence or secret treachery, to march his victorious troops immediately to that city, and seize the assembled abthanes at once as traitors to their country. "Resume the regency," added he, "which you only know how to conduct, and crush a treason which, increasing hourly, now walks openly in the day, threatening all that is virtuous, or faithful to you."

He did not hesitate to decide against this counsel; for, in following it, it could not be one adversary he must strike, but thousands.

"I am only a brother to my countrymen," said he to himself, "and have no right to force them to their duty. When their king appears, then these rebellious heads may be made to bow." While he mused upon the letter of Lennox, Ruthven entered, and the friends returned together into the council-tent. But all there was changed. Most of the Lothian chieftains had also received messengers from their friends in Stirling. Allegations against Wallace, arguments to prove "the policy of submitting themselves and

their properties to the protection of a great and generous King, though a foreigner, rather than to risk all by attaching themselves to the fortunes of a private person who made their services the ladder of his ambition," were the contents of their packets ; and they had been sufficient to shake the easy faith to which they were addressed. On the re-entrance of Wallace, the chieftains stole suspicious glances at each other, and without a word glided severally out of the tent.

Next morning, instead of coming as usual directly to their acknowledged protector, the Lothian chieftains were seen at different parts of the camp closely conversing in groups, and when any of Wallace's officers approached they separated or withdrew to a greater distance. This strange conduct Wallace attributed to its right source, and thought of Bruce with a sigh when he contemplated the variable substance of these men's minds. However, he was so convinced that nothing but the proclamation of Bruce, and that prince's personal exertions, could preserve his country from falling again into the snare from which he had just snatched it, that he was preparing to set out for Perthshire with such persuasions when Ker hastily entered his tent. He was followed by the Lord Soulis, Lord Buchan, and several other chiefs of equally hostile intentions. Soulis did not hesitate to declare his errand.

"We come, Sir William Wallace, by the command of the Regent and the assembled abthanes of Scotland, to take these brave troops, which have performed such good service to their country, from the power of a man who, we have every reason to believe, means to turn their arms against the liberties of the realm. Without a pardon from the states ; without the signature of the Regent ; in contempt of the court which, having found you guilty of high treason, had in mercy delayed to pronounce sentence on your crime, you have presumed to place yourself at the head of the national troops, and to take to yourself the

merit of a victory won by their prowess alone! Your designs are known, and the authority you have despised is now roused to punish. You are to accompany us this day to Stirling. We have brought a guard of four thousand men to compel your obedience."

Before the indignant Wallace could utter the answer his wrongs dictated, Bothwell, who at sight of the Regent's troops had hastened to his general's tent, entered, followed by his chieftains.

"Were your guard forty thousand instead of four," cried he, "they should not force our commander from us—they should not extinguish the glory of Scotland beneath the traitorous devices of hell-engendered envy and murderous cowardice!"

Soulis turned on him with eyes of fire, and laid his hand on his sword.

"Ay, cowardice!" reiterated Bothwell. "The midnight ravisher, the slanderer of virtue, the betrayer of his country, knows in his heart that he fears to draw aught but the assassin's steel. He dreads the sceptre of honour: Wallace must fall, that vice and her votaries may reign in Scotland. A thousand brave Scots lie under these sods, and a thousand yet survive who may share their graves; but they never will relinquish their invincible leader into the hands of traitors!"

The clamours of the citadel of Stirling now resounded through the tent of Wallace. Invectives, accusations, threatenings, reproaches, and revilings, joined in one turbulent uproar. Again swords were drawn, and Wallace, in attempting to beat down the weapons of Soulis and Buchan, aimed at Bothwell's heart, must have received the point of Soulis' in his own body had he not grasped the blade, and, wrenching it out of the chief's hand, broke it into shivers. "Such be the fate of every sword which Scot draws against Scot!" cried he. "Put up your weapons, my friends. The arm of Wallace is not shrunk that he could not defend

himself did he think that violence were necessary. Hear my determination, once and for ever!" added he. "I acknowledge no authority in Scotland but the laws. The present Regent and his abthanes outrage them in every ordinance, and I should indeed be a traitor to my country did I submit to such men's behests. I shall not obey their summons to Stirling, neither will I permit a hostile arm to be raised in this camp against their delegates, unless the violence begins with them. This is my answer." Uttering these words, he motioned Bothwell to follow him, and left the tent.

Crossing a rude plank-bridge which then lay over the Esk, he met Lord Ruthven, accompanied by Lord Sinclair. The latter came to inform Wallace that ambassadors from Edward awaited his presence at Roslyn.

"They come to offer peace to our distracted country," cried Sinclair.

"Then," answered Wallace, "I shall not delay going where I may hear the terms."

Horses were brought; and during their short ride, to prevent the impassioned representations of the still raging Bothwell, Wallace communicated to his not less indignant friends the particulars of the scene he had left. "These contentions must be terminated," added he; "and with God's blessing, a few days and they shall be so!"

"Heaven grant it!" returned Sinclair, thinking he referred to the proposed negotiation. "If Edward's offers be at all reasonable, I would urge you to accept them; otherwise, invasion from without and civil commotion within will probably make a desert of poor Scotland."

Ruthven interrupted him: "Despair not, my lord! Whatever be the fate of this embassy, let us remember that it is our steadiest friend who decides, and that his arm is still with us to repel invasion, to chastise treason!"

Arrived at the gate of Roslyn, Wallace, regardless of those ceremonials which often delay the business they

pretend to dignify, entered at once into the hall where the ambassadors sat. Baron Hilton was one, and Le de Spencer (father to the young and violent envoy of that name) was the other. At sight of the Scottish chief they rose, and the good baron, believing he came on a propitious errand, smiling, said, "Sir William Wallace, it is your private ear I am commanded to seek." While speaking he looked on Sinclair and the other lords.

"These chiefs are as myself," replied Wallace. "But I will not impede your embassy by crossing the wishes of your master in a trifle." He then turned to his friends: "Indulge the monarch of England in making me the first acquainted with that which can only be a message to the whole nation."

The chiefs withdrew; and Hilton, without further parley, opened his mission. He said that King Edward, more than ever impressed with the wondrous military talents of Sir William Wallace, and solicitous to make a friend of so heroic an enemy, had sent him an offer of grace, which, if he contemned, must be the last. He offered him a theatre whereon he might display his peerless endowments to the admiration of the world—the kingdom of Ireland, with its yet unreaped fields of glory, and all the ample riches of its abundant provinces should be his. Edward only required, in return for this royal gift, that he should abandon the cause of Scotland, swear fealty to him for Ireland, and resign into his hands one whom he had proscribed as the most ungrateful of traitors. In double acknowledgment for the latter sacrifice, Wallace need only send to England a list of those Scottish lords against whom he bore resentment, and their fates should be ordered according to his dictates. Edward concluded his offers by inviting him immediately to London to be invested with his new sovereignty; and Hilton ended his address by showing him the madness of abiding in a country where almost every chief, secretly or openly, carried a dagger against his life;

and therefore he exhorted him no longer to contend for a nation so unworthy of freedom, that it bore with impatience the only man who had the courage to maintain its independence by virtue alone.

Wallace replied calmly, and without hesitation: "To this message an honest man can make but one reply. As well might your sovereign exact of me to dethrone the angels of heaven, as to require me to subscribe to his proposals. They do but mock me; and aware of my rejection, they are thus delivered, to throw the whole blame of this cruelly persecuting war upon me. Edward knows that as a knight, a true Scot, and a man, I should dishonour myself to accept even life, ay, or the lives of all my kindred, upon these terms."

Hilton interrupted him by declaring the sincerity of Edward, and contrasting it with the ingratitude of the people whom he had served, he conjured him, with every persuasive of rhetoric, every entreaty dictated by a mind that revered the very firmness he strove to shake, to relinquish his faithless country, and become the friend of a king ready to receive him with open arms.

Wallace shook his head, and with an incredulous smile which spoke his thoughts of Edward, while his eyes beamed kindness upon Hilton, he answered: "Can the man who would bribe me to betray a friend be faithful in his friendship? But that is not the weight with me. I was not brought up in those schools, my good baron, which teach that sound policy or true self-interest can be separated from virtue. When I was a boy, my father often repeated to me this proverb:—

> "'Dico tibi verum, honestas, optima rerum,
> Nunquam servili sub nexu vivitur fili.'

I learned it then; I have since made it the standard of my actions, and I answer your monarch in a word. Were all my countrymen to resign their claims to the liberty which

is their right, I alone would declare the independence of my country; and by God's assistance, while I live, acknowledge no other master than the laws of St. David, and the legitimate heir of his blood."

Baron Hilton turned sorrowfully away, and Le de Spencer rose :—

"Sir William Wallace, my part of the embassy must be delivered to you in the assembly of your chieftains!"

"In the congregation of my camp," returned he; and opening the door of the ante-room, in which his friends stood, he sent to summon his chiefs to the platform before the council-tent.

When Wallace approached his tent, he found not only the captains of his own army, but the followers of Soulis and the chieftains of Lothian. He looked on this range of his enemies with a fearless eye, and passing through the crowd, took his station beside the ambassadors on the platform of the tent. The venerable Hilton turned away with tears on his veteran cheeks as the chief advanced, and Le de Spencer came forward to speak. Wallace, with a dignified action, requested his leave for a few minutes, and then, addressing the congregated warriors, unfolded to them the offer of Edward to him and his reply.

"And now," added he, "the ambassador of England is at liberty to declare his master's alternative."

Le de Spencer again advanced, but the acclamations with which the followers of Wallace acknowledged the nobleness of his answer excited such an opposite clamour on the side of the Soulis party that Le de Spencer was obliged to mount a war-carriage which stood near, and to vociferate long and loudly for silence before he could be heard. But the first words which caught the ears of his audience acted like a spell, and seemed to hold them in breathless attention.

"Since Sir William Wallace rejects the grace of his liege lord, Edward, King of England, offered to him this

once, and never to be again repeated, thus saith the King in his clemency to the earls, barons, knights, and commonalty of Scotland! To every one of them, chief and vassal, excepting the aforesaid incorrigible rebel, he, the royal Edward, grants an amnesty of all their past treasons against his sacred person and rule, provided that within twenty-four hours after they hear the words of this proclamation, they acknowledge their disloyalty, with repentance, and laying down their arms, swear eternal fealty to their only lawful ruler, Edward, the lord of the whole island from sea to sea."

Le de Spencer then proclaimed the King of England to be now on the borders with an army of a hundred thousand men, ready to march with fire and sword into the heart of the kingdom, and put to the rack all of every sex, age, and condition, who should venture to dispute his rights.

"Yield," added he, "while you may yet not only grasp the mercy extended to you, but the rewards and the honours he is ready to bestow. Adhere to that unhappy man, and by to-morrow's sunset your offended King will be on these hills, and then mercy shall be no more! Death is the doom of Sir William Wallace, and a similar fate to every Scot who after this hour dares to give him food, shelter, or succour. He is the prisoner of King Edward, and thus I demand him at your hands!"

Wallace spoke not, but with an unmoved countenance looked around upon the assembly. Bothwell's full soul then forced utterance from his labouring breast:

"Tell your Sovereign," cried he, "that he mistakes. We are the conquerors who ought to dictate terms of peace! Wallace is our invincible leader, our redeemer from slavery, the earthly hope in whom we trust, and it is not in the power of men nor devils to bribe us to betray our benefactor. Away to your King, and tell him that Andrew

Murray and every honest Scot is ready to live or to die by the side of Sir William Wallace."

"And by this good sword I swear the same!" cried Ruthven.

"And so do I!" rejoined Scrymgeour, "or may the standard of Scotland be my winding-sheet!"

"Or may the Clyde swallow us up quick!" exclaimed Lockhart of Lee, shaking his mailed hand at the ambassadors.

But not another chief spoke for Wallace. Even Sinclair was intimidated, and like others who wished him well, he feared to utter his sentiments. But most—oh! shame to Scotland and to man—cast up their bonnets and cried aloud, "Long live King Edward, the only legitimate lord of Scotland!"

At this outcry, which was echoed even by some in whom he had confided, while it pealed around him like a burst of thunder, Wallace threw out his arms, as if he would yet protect Scotland from herself,—

"Oh, desolate people!" exclaimed he, in a voice of piercing woe, "too credulous of fair speeches, and not aware of the calamities which are coming upon you! Call to remembrance the miseries you have suffered, and start, before it be too late, from this last snare of your oppressor! Have I yet to tell ye that his embrace is death? Oh! look yet to heaven and ye shall find a rescue!"

"Seize that rebellious man," cried Soulis to his marshals. "In the name of the King of England, I command you."

"And in the name of the King of kings, I denounce death on him who attempts it!" exclaimed Bothwell, throwing himself between Wallace and the men; "put forth a hostile hand towards him, and this bugle shall call a thousand resolute swords to lay this platform in blood!"

Soulis, followed by his knights, pressed forward to execute this treason himself. Scrymgeour, Ruthven, Lockhart,

and Ker rushed before their friend. Edwin, starting forward, drew his sword, and the clash of steel was heard. Bothwell and Soulis grappled together, the falchion of Ruthven gleamed amidst a hundred swords, and blood flowed around. The voice, the arm of Wallace, in vain sought to enforce peace; he was not heard, he was not felt in the dreadful warfare. Ker fell with a gasp at his feet, and breathed no more.

At that moment Bothwell, having disabled Soulis, would have blown his bugle to call up his men to a general conflict, but Wallace snatched the horn from his hand, and springing upon the very war-carriage from which Le de Spencer had proclaimed Edward's embassy, he drew forth his sword, and stretching the mighty arm that held it over the throng, he exclaimed,—

"Peace, men of Scotland! and for the last time hear the voice of William Wallace."

A dead silence immediately ensued, and he proceeded,—

"If you have aught of nobleness within ye, if a delusion more fell than witchcraft has not blinded your senses, look beyond this field of horror, and behold your country free. Edward in these apparent demands sues for peace. Did we not drive his armies into the sea? And were we resolved, he never could cross our borders more. What is it then you do, when you again put your necks under his yoke? Did he not seek to bribe me to betray you? and yet when I refuse to purchase life and the world's rewards by such baseness, you—you forget that you are free-born Scots, that you are the victors, and he the vanquished; and you give, not sell, your birthright to the demands of a tyrant! You yield yourselves to his extortions, his oppressions, his revenge! Think not he will spare the people he would have sold to purchase his bitterest enemy, or allow them to live unmanacled who possess the power of resistance. On the day in which you are in his hands you will feel that you have exchanged honour for disgrace, liberty

for bondage, life for death! I draw this sword for you no more. But there yet lives a prince, a descendant of the royal heroes of Scotland, whom Providence may conduct to be your preserver. Reject the proposals of Edward, dare to defend the freedom you now possess, and that prince will soon appear to crown your patriotism with glory and happiness!"

"We acknowledge no prince but King Edward of England!" cried Buchan.

The exclamation was reiterated by a most disgraceful majority on the ground. Wallace was transfixed.

"Then," cried Le de Spencer in the first pause of the tumult, "to every man, woman, and child throughout the realm of Scotland, excepting Sir William Wallace, I proclaim in the name of King Edward pardon and peace."

At these words several hundred Scottish chieftains dropped on their knees before Le de Spencer, and murmured their vows of fealty.

Indignant, grieved, Wallace took his helmet from his head, and throwing his sword into the hand of Bothwell,—

"That weapon," cried he, "which I wrested from this very King Edward, and with which I twice drove him from our borders, I give to you. I relinquish a soldier's name, on the spot where I humbled England three times in one day, where I now see my victorious country deliver herself bound into the grasp of the vanquished! I go without sword or buckler from this dishonoured field, and what Scot, my public or private enemy, will dare to strike the unguarded head of William Wallace?"

As he spoke, he threw his shield and helmet to the ground, and, leaping from the war-carriage, took his course through the parting ranks of his enemies, who, awe-struck, or kept in check by a suspicion that others might not second the attack they would have made on him, durst not lift an arm or breathe a word as he passed.

—Jane Porter, *The Scottish Chiefs.*

VIII

How Queen Isabella left the King her Husband

KING EDWARD THE SECOND, father to the noble King Edward the Third, governed right diversely his realm by the exhortation of Sir Hugh Spencer, who had been nourished with him since the beginning of his youth; the which Sir Hugh had so enticed the King, that his father and he were the greatest masters in all the realm, and by envy thought to surmount all other barons of England; whereby after the great discomfiture that the Scots had made at Stirling, great murmuring there arose in England between the noble barons and the King's council, and namely, against Sir Hugh Spencer. They put on him, that by his counsel they were discomfited, and that he was favourable to the King of Scots. And on this point the barons had divers times communication together, to be advised what they might do; whereof Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, who was uncle to the King, was chief. And anon, when Sir Hugh Spencer had espied this, he purveyed for remedy, for he was so great with the King, and so near him, that he was more beloved with the King than all the world after.

So on a day he came to the King, and said: "Sir, certain lords of your realm have made alliance together against you; and without ye take heed thereto betimes, they purpose to put you out of your realm": and so by his malicious means he caused that the King made all the said

lords to be taken, and their heads to be stricken off without delay, and without knowledge or answer to any cause. First of all Sir Thomas Earl of Lancaster, who was a noble and a wise, holy knight, and hath done since many fair miracles in Pontefract, where he was beheaded, for the which deed the said Sir Hugh Spencer achieved great hate in all the realm, and specially of the Queen, and of the Earl of Kent, brother to the King.

And when he perceived the displeasure of the Queen, by his subtle wit he set great discord between the King and the Queen, so that the King would not see the Queen, nor come in her company; the which discord endured a long space. Then was it shewed to the Queen secretly, and to the Earl of Kent, that without they took good heed to themselves, they were likely to be destroyed; for Sir Hugh Spencer was about to purchase much trouble to them. Then the Queen secretly did purvey to go into France, and took her way as on pilgrimage to Saint Thomas of Canterbury, and so to Winchelsea; and in the night went into a ship that was ready for her, and her young son Edward with her, and the Earl of Kent and Sir Roger Mortimer; and in another ship they had put all their purveyance, and had wind at will, and the next morning they arrived in the haven of Boulogne.

When Queen Isabel was arrived at Boulogne, and her son with her, and the Earl of Kent, the captains and abbot of the town came against her, and joyously received her and her company into the abbey, and there she abode two days: then she departed, and rode so long by her journeys, that she arrived at Paris. Then King Charles, her brother, who was informed of her coming, sent to meet her divers of the greatest lords of his realm, as the Lord Sir Robert d'Artois, the Lord of Coucy, the Lord of Sully, the Lord of Roye, and divers other, who honourably did receive her, and brought her into the city of Paris to the King her brother. And when the King saw his sister, whom he had

"By his subtle wit he set great discord between the king and queen."

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not seen long before, as she should have entered into his chamber he met her, and took her in his arms, and kissed her, and said: "Ye be welcome, fair sister, with my fair nephew your son"; and took them by the hands, and led them forth.

The Queen, who had no great joy at her heart, but that she was so near to the King her brother, she would have kneeled down two or three times at the feet of the King, but the King would not suffer her, but held her still by the right hand, demanding right sweetly of her estate and business. And she answered him right sagely, and lamentably recounted to him all the felonies and injuries done to her by Sir Hugh Spencer, and required him of his aid and comfort.

When the noble King Charles of France had heard his sister's lamentation, who weepingly had shewed him all her need and business, he said to her: "Fair sister, appease yourself; for by the faith I owe to God and to Saint Denis, I shall right well purvey for you some remedy."

The Queen then kneeled down, whether the King would or not, and said: "My right dear lord and fair brother, I pray God reward you."

The King then took her in his arms, and led her into another chamber, the which was apparelled for her, and for the young Edward her son, and so departed from her, and caused at his costs and charges all things to be delivered that was behoveful for her and for her son.

After it was not long, but that for this occasion Charles, King of France, assembled together many great lords and barons of the realm of France, to have their counsel and good advice how they should ordain for the need and business of his sister Queen of England. Then it was counselled to the King, that he should let the Queen his sister to purchase for herself friends, whereas she would, in the realm of France, or in any other place, and himself to feign and be not known thereof; for, they said, to move

war with the King of England, and to bring his own realm into hatred, it were nothing appertinent nor profitable to him, nor to his realm. But, they concluded, that conveniently he might aid her with gold and silver, for that is the metal whereby love is attained, both of gentlemen and of poor soldiers. And to this counsel and advice accorded the King, and caused this to be shewed to the Queen privily by Sir Robert d'Artois, who as then was one of the greatest lords of all France.

Then the Queen, as secretly as she could, she ordained for her voyage, and made her purveyance; but she could not do it so secretly, but Sir Hugh Spencer had knowledge thereof. Then he thought to win and withdraw the King of France from her by great gifts, and so sent secret messengers into France with great plenty of gold and silver and rich jewels, and specially to the King, and his privy council; and did so much that, in short space, the King of France and all his privy council were as cold to help the Queen in her voyage, as they had before great desire to do it. And the King brake all that voyage, and defended every person in his realm, on pain of banishing the same, that none should be so hardy to go with the Queen to bring her again into England. And yet the said Sir Hugh Spencer advised him of more malice, and bethought him how he might get again the Queen into England, to be under the King's danger and his. Then he caused the King to write to the holy father the Pope affectuously, desiring him that he would send and write to the King of France, that he should send the Queen his wife again into England; for he will acquit himself to God and the world, and that it was not his fault that she departed from him; for he would nothing to her but all love and good faith, such as he ought to hold in marriage. Also there were like letters written to the cardinals, devised by many subtle ways, the which all may not be written here.

Also he sent gold and silver great plenty to divers

cardinals and prelates, such as were most nearest and secretest with the Pope, and right sage and able ambassadors were sent on this message; and they led the Pope in such wise by their gifts and subtle ways, that he wrote to the King of France that, on pain of cursing, he should send his sister Isabel into England to the King her husband.

These letters were brought to the King of France by the Bishop of Saintes, whom the Pope sent in that legation. And when the King had read the letters, he caused them to be shewn to the Queen his sister, whom he had not seen of long space before, commanding her hastily to avoid his realm, or else he would cause her to avoid with shame.

—*Froissart's Chronicle*, by Lord Berners, cap. vi.–viii

IX

The Queen Wins a Battle

WHEN the King of England had besieged Calais, and lay there, the Scots determined to make war into England, and to be revenged of such hurts as they had taken before: for they said then, how that the realm of England was void of men of war; for they were, as they said, with the King of England before Calais, and some in Bretagne, Poitou, and Gascony: the French King did what he could to stir the Scots to that war, to the intent that the King of England should break up his siege, and return to defend his own realm. The King of Scots made his summons to be at Perth, on the river of Tay, in Scotland; thither came earls, barons, and prelates of Scotland, and there agreed, that in all haste possible, they should enter England; to come in that journey was desired John of the out Isles, who governed the wild Scots, for to him they obeyed, and to no man else; he came with a three thousand of the most outrageous people in all that country.

When all the Scots were assembled, they were of one and other, a fifty thousand fighting men; they could not make their assembly so secret, but that the Queen of England, who was as then in the marches of the North, about York, knew all their dealing: then she sent all about for men, and lay herself at York; then all men of war and archers came to Newcastle with the Queen. In the mean season, the King of Scots departed from Perth and went to Dun-

fermline the first day; the next day they passed a little arm of the sea, and so came to Stirling, and then to Edinburgh: then they numbered their company, and they were a three thousand men of arms, knights, and squires, and a thirty thousand of other, on hackneys: then they came to Roxburgh, the first fortress English on that part; captain there was Sir William Montague. The Scots passed by without any assault-making, and so went forth, burning and destroying the country of Northumberland, and their couriers ran to York, and burnt as much as was without the walls, and returned again to their host, within a day's journey of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The Queen of England, who desired to defend her country, came to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and there tarried for her men, who came daily from all parts. When the Scots knew that the Englishmen assembled at Newcastle, they drew thitherward, and their couriers came running before the town; and at their returning, they burnt certain small hamlets thereabout, so that the smoke thereof came into the town of Newcastle. Some of the Englishmen would have issued out, to have fought with them that made the fires, but the captains would not suffer them to issue out.

The next day the King of Scots, with a forty thousand men, one and other, came and lodged within three little English mile of Newcastle, in the land of the Lord Nevill, and the King sent to them within the town, that if they would issue out into the field, he would fight with them gladly. The lords and prelates of England said they were content to adventure their lives with the right and heritage of the King of England, their master; then they all issued out of the town, and were in number a twelve hundred men of arms, three thousand archers, and seven thousand of other, with the Welshmen.

Then the Scots came and lodged against them, near together: then every man was set in order of battle: then

the Queen came among her men, and there was ordained four battles, one to aid another: the first had in governance the Bishop of Durham, and the Lord Percy: the second the Archbishop of York, and the Lord Nevill: the third the Bishop of Lincoln, and the Lord Mowbray: the fourth the Lord Edward de Balliol, captain of Berwick, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Ros: every battle had like number, after their quantity. The Queen went from battle to battle, desiring them to do their devoir, to defend the honour of her lord the King of England, and in the name of God, every man to be of good heart and courage, promising them, that to her power she would remember them as well or better, as though her lord the King were there personally. Then the Queen departed from them, recommending them to God and to Saint George.

Then anon after, the battles of the Scots began to set forward, and in like wise so did the Englishmen; then the archers began to shoot on both parties, but the shot of the Scots endured but a short space, but the archers of England shot so fiercely, so that when the battles approached, there was a hard battle; they began at nine, and endured till noon: the Scots had great axes, sharp and hard, and gave with them many great strokes; howbeit, finally the Englishmen obtained the place and victory, but they lost many of their men. There were slain of the Scots, the Earl of Fife, the Earl of Buchan, the Earl of Dunbar, the Earl of Sutherland, the Earl of Strathern, the Earl of Mar, the Earl John Douglas, and the Lord Alexander Ramsay, who bare the King's banner, and divers other knights and squires. And there the King was taken, who fought valiantly, and was sore hurt; a squire of Northumberland took him, called John Copeland, and as soon as he had taken the King, he went with him out of the field, with eight of his servants with him, and so rode all that day, till he was a fifteen leagues from the place of the battle, and at night he came to a castle called Ogle; and then he said he would not

deliver the King of Scots to no man nor woman living, but all only to the King of England, his lord. The same day there was also taken in the field the Earl Moray, the Earl of March, the Lord William Douglas, the Lord Robert Vesey, the Bishop of Aberdeen, the Bishop of St. Andrew's, and divers other knights and barons. And there were slain of one and other a fifteen thousand, and the others saved themselves as well as they might: this battle was beside Newcastle, the year of our Lord MCCCXLVI., the Saturday next after Saint Michael.

Then the Queen made good provision for the city of York, the castle of Roxburgh, the city of Durham, the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in all other garrisons on the marches of Scotland, and left in those marches the Lord Percy, and the Lord Nevill, as governors there: then the Queen departed from York towards London. Then she set the King of Scots in the strong Tower of London, and the Earl Moray, and all other prisoners, and set good keeping over them. Then she went to Dover, and there took the sea, and had so good wind, that in a short space she arrived before Calais, three days before the feast of All Saints, for whose coming the King made a great feast and dinner, to all the lords and ladies that were there; the Queen brought many ladies and damosels with her, as well to accompany her, as to see their husbands, fathers, brothers, and other friends that lay at siege there before Calais, and had done a long space.

—*Froissart's Chronicle*, by LORD BERNERS, cap. cxxxvii.–cxxxix

X

The Deposition of the King

THE Duke of Bretagne and the Earl of Derby were lovingly concluded together, and when all thing was ready, the duke and the earl came thither, and when the wind served the Earl of Derby and his company took the sea; he had with him three ships of war to conduct him into England, and the further they sailed the better wind they had, so that within two days and two nights they arrived at Plymouth in England, and issued out of their ships; and entered into the town little and little. The baily of Plymouth, who had charge of the town under the King, had great marvel when he saw so much people and men of war enter into the town; but the Bishop of Canterbury appeased him, and said how they were men of war that would do no harm in the realm of England, sent thither by the Duke of Bretagne to serve the King and the realm. Therewith the baily was content, and the Earl of Derby kept himself so privy in a chamber, that none of the town knew him.

Then the Bishop of Canterbury wrote letters signed with his hand to London, signifying the coming of the Earl of Derby, and sent them by a sufficient man in post, who took fresh horses by the way, and came to London the same day at night, and passed over the bridge and so came to the mayor's lodging, who as then was a-bed; and as soon as the mayor knew that a messenger was come from the Bishop of

"And ever as they rode forward they met more people."

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Canterbury, he rose out of his bed and made the messenger to enter into his chamber, who delivered him a letter from the Bishop of Canterbury. The mayor read it and rejoiced greatly of those news, and incontinent he sent of his servants from house to house, principally to such as were of counsel of sending for the Earl of Derby. They were all glad of that tidings, and incontinent there assembled together of the most notablest men of the city to the number of two hundred, and they spake together, and held no long council, for the case required it not, but they said: "Let us apparel ourself and go and receive the Duke of Lancaster, since we agreed to send for him; the Archbishop of Canterbury hath well done his devoir, seeing that he brought him into England." Then they did choose certain men to go abroad to publish the Earl's coming to lords, knights, and squires, such as were of their party, and more than five hundred of the Londoners took their horses, and they had so great desire to go forth that they were loth to tarry one for another.

The Earl of Derby tarried not long at Plymouth, but the next day as soon as their horses were unshipped they rode towards London; and all that season Sir Peter of Craonne and the Bretons were still with the earl. The mayor of London and they that had the governing of the city, were the first that met the earl in the fields, and humbly received him, and ever as they rode forward they met more people. The first day they came and lay at Guildford, a five and twenty mile from London: the next day a great number of the men, women, and children of London, and the clergy came to meet with the earl, they had such desire to see him.

The mayor rode cheek and cheek by him, which was great pleasure for the people to see; and the mayor sometime said to the earl: "Sir, behold how the people rejoice of your coming." "That is true," quoth the earl, and always as he rode he inclined his head to the people on every side. Thus the earl was brought to his lodging, and every man

departed till after dinner. Then the mayor and the notable men of the city, and divers other lords and knights, prelates, bishops, and abbots, such as were in London came to see the earl; also the Duchess of Gloucester and her two daughters came to see the earl, who were his cousins-German. Humphrey their brother was with King Richard, more for fear than for love. With these ladies was the Countess of Arundel and her children, and also the Countess of Warwick, with divers other ladies, such as were at London. The people of London were so joyful of the earl's coming, that there was no more working in London that day than an it had been Easter Day.

To come to a conclusion of this business: The people took counsel and advice to ride against the King, whom the Londoners named Richard of Bordeaux, King without title or honour: for the villains of London had the King in such hate, that it was pain for them to hear speaking of him, but to his condemnation and destruction, for they had treated the Earl of Derby to be their King, and he was much ordered by their counsels. The Earl of Derby took on him to be King, and so to endure for ever, he and his heirs; and thereto the Londoners did swear and seal, and promised that all the residue of the realm should do the same, so solemnly that there should never question be made thereof after; also they promised him to aid and to assist him always. These promises and bonds once taken and concluded, then it was ordained that twelve hundred men of London, well-armed, should ride with the earl towards Bristol, and to do so much, that Richard of Bordeaux might be taken and brought to London, and then to take advice what should be done with him, and to be judged by the law and by the three estates of the realm: also it was ordained (to make the less bruit and slander), that the men of war of Bretagne, such as were come thither with the earl, should be returned home again, for it was said that they had men enough to do their own deeds without them; so that the earl had all the Bretons

before him, and thanked them of their service that they had done him, and gave them great rewards so that they were well content, and so returned to Plymouth to the ships and so into Bretagne.

The Earl of Derby was chief of that army, as reason was, for it touched him most nearest. Thus he departed from London, and as he rode, the country fell in to him. Tidings came into the King's host of the coming of the Earl of Derby and of the Londoners : many knights, squires, and others knew it or the King had knowledge thereof, but they durst not speak thereof. When the tidings spread more abroad, such as were next the King were in great fear, for they knew well the King and they both were likely to fall in peril, because they had so many enemies in the realm ; and such were then their enemies, that had made good face before, for many knights, squires, and other, such as had served the King before, departed from the court without any licence ; some went home to their own houses, and some took the next way they could straight to the Earl of Derby to serve him.

The Earl of Derby and the Londoners had their spies going and coming, who reported to them all the state of the King ; and also the earl knew it by such knights and squires as daily came from the king's part to the earl, who had sure knowledge that the King was gone to the castle of Flint, and had no company with him but such as were of his own household, and seemed that he would no war, but to escape that danger by treaty. Then the earl determined to ride thither, and to do so much to have the king either by force or by treaty. Then the earl and all his company rode thither, and within two mile of the castle they found a great village ; there the earl tarried and drank, and determined in himself to ride to the castle of Flint with two hundred horse, and to leave the rest of his company still there : and he said he would do what he could by fair treaty to enter into the castle by love and not perforce, and to bring out

the King with fair words, and to assure him from all peril, except going to London, and to promise him that he shall have no hurt of his body, and to be mean for him to the Londoners, who were not content with him.

The earl's device seemed good to them that heard it, and they said to him: "Sir, beware of dissimulation: this Richard of Bordeaux must be taken either quick or dead, and all the other traitors that be about him and of his counsel, and so to be brought to London and set in the Tower; the Londoners will not suffer you to do the contrary." Then the earl said: "Sirs, fear not, but all that is enterprised shall be accomplished; but if I can get him out of the castle with fair words, I will do it; and if I can not, I shall send you word thereof, and then ye shall come and lay siege about the castle, and then we will do so much by force or by assault, that we will have him quick or dead, for the castle is well pregnable." To those words accorded well the Londoners.

So the earl departed from the army, and rode with two hundred men to the castle, whereas the King was among his men right sore abashed. The earl came riding to the castle gate, which was fast closed, as the case required: the earl knocked at the gate; the porters demanded who was there; the earl answered, "I am Henry of Lancaster; I come to the King to demand mine heritage of the duchy of Lancaster; shew the King this from me." "Sir," quoth they within, "we shall do it." Incontinent they went into the hall and into the donjon where the King was, and such knights about him as had long time counselled him. Then these news were shewed to the King, and said: "Sir, your cousin of Derby is at the gate, who demandeth of you to be set in possession of the duchy of Lancaster his inheritance." The King then regarded such as were about him, and demanded what was best to do. They said: "Sir, in this request is none evil; ye may let him come in to you with twelve persons in his company, and hear what he will say;

he is your cousin, and a great lord of the realm; he may well make your peace an he will, for he is greatly beloved in the realm, and specially with the Londoners, who sent for him into France; they be as now the chief that be against you. Sir, you must dissemble till the matter be appeased, and till the Earl of Huntingdon your brother be with you; and it cometh now evil to pass for you that he is at Calais, for there be many now in England that be risen against you, that an they knew that your brother were about you, they would sit still and durst not displease you: and yet he hath to his wife the Earl of Derby's sister: by his means we suppose ye should come to peace and concord." The King agreed to those words, and said: "Go and let him come in with twelve with him and no more." Two knights went down to the gate, and opened the wicket and issued out and made reverence to the earl, and received him with gracious words, for they knew well that they had no force to resist them, and also they knew well the Londoners were sore displeased with them: therefore they spake fair, and said to the earl: "Sir, what is your pleasure? the King is at mass; he hath sent us hither to speak with you." "I say," quoth the earl, "ye know well I ought to have possession of the duchy of Lancaster; I am come in part for that cause, and also for other things that I would speak with the King of." "Sir," quoth they, "ye be welcome; the King would be glad to see you and to hear you, and hath commanded that ye come to him all only with twelve persons." The earl answered: "It pleaseth me well": so he entered into the castle with twelve persons, and then the gate closed again, and the rest of his company tarried without.

Now consider what danger the Earl of Derby was in, for the King then might have slain him and such as were with him, as easily as a bird in a cage; but he feared not the matter, but boldly went to the King, who changed colours when he saw the earl. Then the earl spake aloud, without making of any great honour or reverence, and said: "Sir,

are ye fasting?" The King answered and said: "Yea, why ask you?" "It is time," quoth the earl, "that ye had dined, for ye have a great journey to ride." "Why, whither should I ride?" quoth the King.

"Ye must ride to London," quoth the earl, "wherefore I counsel you eat and drink, that ye may ride with the more mirth." Then the King, who was sore troubled in his mind, and in a manner afraid of those words, said, "I am not hungry; I have no lust to eat." Then such as were by, who were as then glad to flatter the Earl of Derby, for they saw well the matter was like to go diversely, said to the King: "Sir, believe your cousin of Lancaster, for he will nothing but good." Then the King said: "Well, I am content; cover the tables." Then the King washed and sat down and was served. Then the earl was demanded if he would sit down: he said No, for he was not fasting.

In the mean season while the King sat at dinner, who did eat but little, his heart was so full that he had no lust to eat, all the country about the castle was full of men of war: they within the castle might see them out at the windows, and the King when he rose from the table might see them himself. Then he demanded of his cousin what men they were that appeared so many in the fields. The earl answered and said: "The most part of them be Londoners." "What would they have?" quoth the King. "They will have you," quoth the earl, "and bring you to London, and put you into the Tower; there is none other remedy, ye can 'scape none otherwise." "No?" quoth the King; and he was sore afraid of those words, for he knew well the Londoners loved him not, and said: "Cousin, can you not provide for my surety? I will not gladly put me into their hands, for I know well they hate me, and have done long, though I be their King." Then the earl said: "Sir, I see none other remedy but to yield yourself as my prisoner; and when they know that ye be my prisoner they will do you no hurt; but ye must so ordain you and

your company to ride to London with me, and to be as my prisoner in the Tower of London."

The King, who saw himself in a hard case, all his spirits were sore abashed, as he that doubted greatly that the Londoners would slay him. Then he yielded himself prisoner to the Earl of Derby, and bound himself, and promised to do all that he would have him to do. In likewise all other knights, squires, and officers yielded to the earl, to eschew the danger and peril that they were in; and the earl then received them as his prisoners. Thus the Duke of Lancaster departed, and rode to Sheen, and from thence in the night time they conveyed the King to the Tower of London, and such other knights and squires as the King would. The next morning when the Londoners knew that the King was in the Tower, they were greatly rejoiced, but there was great murmuring among them, because the King was conveyed thither so secretly; they were angry that the duke had not brought him through London openly, not to have done him honour, but shame, they hated him so sore. Behold the opinion of common people, when they be up against their prince or lord, and specially in England; among them there is no remedy, for they are the periloust people of the world, and most outrageous if they be up, and specially the Londoners, and indeed they be rich and of a great number; there was well in London a twenty-four thousand men in harness complete, and a thirty thousand archers, and they were hardy and high of courage: the more blood they saw shed, the less they were abashed.
—*Froissart's Chronicle*, by Lord Berners, cap. ccxl--ccxlii.

XI

At the Coronation of the King

RICHARD OF WOODVILLE rode away for London, accompanied by two yeomen, a page, and Ned Dyram, whose talents had not been long in displaying themselves in the service of his master.

The first day's journey was a long one, and Richard of Woodville and his train were not many miles from London when they again set forth early on the following morning, so that it was not yet noon, on the ninth of April, when they approached the city of Westminster, along the banks of the Thames.

Winding in and out through fields and hedgerows, where now are houses, manufactories, and prisons, with the soft air of spring breathing upon them, and the scent of the early cowslips, for which that neighbourhood was once famous, rising up and filling the whole air, they came on, now catching, now losing the view of the large, heavy Abbey Church of Westminster, and its yet unfinished towers of the same height as the main building, while rising tall above it appeared the belfry of St. Stephen's Chapel, with its peaked roof open at the sides, displaying part of the three enormous bells, one of which was said (falsely) to weigh thirty thousand pounds. The top of two other towers might also be seen, from time to time, over the trees, and also part of the buildings of the monastery adjoining the Abbey; but these were soon lost as the lane which the

travellers were following wound round under the west side of Tote Hill, a gentle elevation covered with greensward, and ornamented with clumps of oak and beech and fir, amidst which might be discovered, here and there, some large stone houses, richly ornamented with sculpture, and surrounded with their own gardens. The lanes, the paths, the fields were filled with groups of people in their holiday costume, all flocking towards Westminster; and what with the warm sunshine, the greenness of the grass, the tender verdure of the young foliage, and the gay dresses of the people, the whole scene was as bright and lively as it is possible to conceive. At the same time the loud bells of St. Stephen's began to ring with the merriest tones they could produce, and a distant "hurrah!" came upon the wind.

"Now, Ned, which is the way?" asked Richard of Woodville, calling up his attendant to his side, as they came to a spot where the lane divided into two branches, one taking the right hand side of the hill, and one the left. "This seems the nearest," he continued, pointing down the former; "but I know nought of the city."

"The nearest may prove the farthest," replied Ned Dyram, riding up, "as it often does, my master. That is the shortest, good sooth! but they call the shortest often the fool's way, and we might be made to look like fools if we took it; for though it leads round to the end of St. Stephen's lane, methinks that to-day none will be admitted to the palace court by that gate, as it is the King's coronation morning."

"Indeed!" said Woodville, "I knew not that it was so."

"Nor I either," answered Ned; "but I know it now."

"And how, pray?" asked his new master.

"By every sight and sound," replied Ned Dyram; "by that girl's pink coats, by that good man's blue cloak, by the bells ringing, by the people running, by the hurrah we heard just now. I ever put all I hear and see together, for a man

who only sees one thing at once will never know what time he is living in."

"Then we had better turn to the left," said Woodville, not caring to hear more of his homily; "of course, if this be the coronation day, I shall not get speech of the King till to-morrow; but we may as well see what is going on."

"To the left will lead you right," replied his quibbling companion, "that is to say, to the great gate before the palace court, and then we shall discover whether the King will speak with you or not. Each prince has his own manners, and ours has changed so boldly in one day, that no one can judge from that which the lad did what the man will do."

"Has he changed much, then?" asked Woodville, riding on; "it must have been sudden, indeed, if you had time to see it ere you left him."

"Ay, has he!" answered Dyram; "the very day of his father's death he put on, not the robes of royalty, but the heart, and those who were his comrades before gave place to other men. They who counted much upon his love found a cold face, and they who looked for hate met with nought but grace."

"Then perhaps my reception may not be very warm," said Woodville thoughtfully.

"You may judge yourself better than I can, master mine," replied Ned Dyram. "Did you ever sit with him in the tavern drinking quarts of wine?"

"No," answered Richard of Woodville, smiling.

"Then you shall be free of his table," said Ned. "Did you ever shoot deer with him by moonlight?"

"Never," was his master's reply.

"Then you may chance to taste his venison!" rejoined the man. "Did you ever brawl, swear, or break heads for him, or with him?"

"No, truly," said the young gentleman. "I fought under him with the army in Wales, when he and I were both but

boys, and I led him on his way one dark night, two days before his father died; but that is all I know of him."

"Then, perchance, you may enter into his council," answered Dyram; "for now that he is royal, he thinks royally, and he judges man for himself, not with the eyes of others."

"As all kings should," said Richard of Woodville.

"And few kings do," rejoined Ned. "I was not so lucky; but many a mad prank have I seen during the last year; and though he knows, and heaven knows, I never prompted what others did, yet I was one of the old garments he cast off as soon as he put on the new ones. I fared better than the rest, indeed, because I sometimes had told him a rough truth; and trust I shall fare better still, if I do his bidding."

"And what may be his bidding?" asked Richard of Woodville; "for, doubtless, he gave you one when he sent you to me."

"He bade me live well and forget former days, as he had forgotten them," replied Ned Dyram; "and he bade me serve you well, master, if you took me with you; so you have no cause to think ill of the counsel that he gave me in your case. But here we are, master mine, and a goodly sight it is to see."

As he spoke they turned into the wide street, or rather road, which led from the village of Charing to the gates of the palace at Westminster, and a gay and beautiful scene it certainly presented, whichever side the eye turned. To the north was seen the old gothic building where the royal falcons were kept, and called from that circumstance the Mew, while a little in advance, upon a spot slightly elevated, stood the beautiful stone cross, one of the monuments of undying regard, erected in the village of Charing by King Edward the First. To the left appeared the buttery and lodge and other offices of the hospital and convent of St. James's, forming together a large pile of buildings, with

gates and arches cutting each other in somewhat strange confusion, while the higher storeys, supported by corbels, overhung the lower. The effect of the whole, however, massed together by the distance, was grand and striking, while the trees of the fields, then belonging to the nunnery and afterwards formed into a park, broke the harsher lines and marked the distances down the course of the wide road.

A little nearer, but on the opposite side of the way, with gardens and stairs extending to the river, was the palace or lodging of the Kings of Scotland. The edifice has been destroyed, but the ground has still retained the name which it then bore, and many years had not elapsed, at the time I speak of, since that mansion had been inhabited by the monarchs of the northern part of this island when they came to take their seats in parliament in right of their English feoffs. Gardens succeeded, till appeared, somewhat projecting beyond the line of road, the old stern building which had once been the property of Hubert de Burg, Earl of Kent, more like a fortress than a dwelling, though its gloomy aspect was relieved by a light and beautiful chapel, lately built on the side nearest to Westminster by one of the Archbishops of York.

Several smaller edifices, sometimes constructed of brick, sometimes of grey stone, were seen on the right and left, all in that peculiar style of architecture so well fitted to the climate of northern Europe and the character of her people, and still between all appeared the green branches of oaks, and beeches, and fields, and gardens, blending the city and the country together.

Up the long vista thus presented were visible thousands of groups on horseback and on foot, decked out in gay and glittering colours, and as brilliant a scene displayed itself to the south, in the wide court before the palace, surrounding which appeared the venerable Abbey, the vast hall, the long line of the royal dwelling, the monastery, the chapel of St. Stephen, with its tall belfry, and many another tower

and lofty archway, and the old church of St. Margaret, built about a century and a half before, together with the lofty yet heavy buildings of the Woolstaple and the row of arches underneath. Banners and pennons fluttering in the wind; long gowns of monks and secular clergymen; tabards and mantles of every hue under the sun; the robes and head-dresses of the ladies and their women, and the gorgeous trappings of the horses catching the light as they moved hither and thither, rendered the line from the Eleanor Cross to the palace one living rainbow; while the river, flowing gently on upon the east, was covered with boats, all tricked out with streamers and fluttering ribbons. Even the grave, the old, and those dedicated to seclusion and serious thought, seemed to have come forth for this one day, and amongst the crowd might be distinguished more than one of the long grey, black, or white gowns, with the coif and veil which marked the nun. All seemed gay, however, and nothing was heard but laughter, merriment, gay jests, the ringing of the bells, the sounding of clarions, and, every now and then, the deep tone of the organ through the open windows of the Abbey, or a wild burst of martial music from the lesser court of the palace.

Habited in mourning, Richard of Woodville felt himself hardly fitted for so gay a scene, but his good mien and courteous carriage gained him many a civil word as he moved along, or perchance some shrewd jest, as the frank simplicity of those days allowed.

"Where is the black man going?" cried a pert London apprentice; "he must be chief mourner for the dead King."

"Nay, he is fair enough to look upon, Tom," replied a pretty girl by his side. "You would give much to be as fair."

"Take care of my toes, master," exclaimed a stout citizen, "your horse is mettlesome."

"He shall not hurt you, good sir," replied Woodville.

"Let me hold by your leg, sir squire," said a woman near, "so shall I have a stout prop."

"Blessings on his fair good-natured face," cried an old woman; "he has lost his lady, I will wager my life."

"You have not much there to lose, good woman," answered a man behind her.

"Well, he will soon find another lady," rejoined a buxom dame, who seemed of the same party, "if he takes those eyes to court."

"Out on it, master," exclaimed a man who had been amusing the people round him by bad jokes; "is your horse a cut purse? He had his nose in my pouch."

"Where he found nothing, I dare say," answered Woodville; and in the midst of the peal of laughter which followed from the easily moved multitude he made his way forward to the gates, where he was stopped by a wooden barrier drawn across and guarded by a large posse of the royal attendants, habited in their coats of ceremony.

"What now? what now?" asked one of the jacks of office, with a large mace in his hand, as Woodville rode up; "you can have no entrance here, sir squire, if you be not of the King's house, or have not an order from one of his lords. The court is crowded already. The King will not have room to pass back."

Before his master could answer, however, Ned Dyram pushed forward his horse, and addressed the porter, saying, in a tone of authority, "Up with the barrier, Master Robert Nesenham. 'Tis a friend of the King's, for whom he sent me—Master Richard of Woodville—you know the name."

"That's another affair, Ned," replied the other; "but let me see, are not you on the list of those who must not come to court?"

"Not I," replied Ned Dyram; "or if I be, you have put me on yourself, Robin; 'tis but the other day I left his Grace upon this errand."

"Well, come in if it be so, varlet," replied the porter,

lifting the barrier; "but if you come forbidden, the pillory and your ears will be acquainted. How many men of you are there? Stand back, fellows, or I will break your pates. See, Tim, there is a fellow slipping through! Drive him back—give him a throw—cast him over—break his neck—five of you, that is all—stand back, fellows, or you shall into limbo."

While the good man strove with the crowd without, who all struggled manfully to push through the barrier when it was open, Richard of Woodville and his followers made their way on into the court, and dismounting from his horse in the more open space which it afforded, he advanced towards the passage which was kept clear by the royal officers, between the door of the great hall and the Abbey. At first he was placed near a stout man dressed as a wealthy citizen, and he inquired of him how long the King had been in the church.

"Three parts of an hour," replied the other; "did you not hear the shout and the bells begin to ring? Oh! it was a grand sight! There was——" but the rest of what he said was drowned by the noise around, aided by a loud flourish of trumpets from the hall.

There was a loud "hurrah!" from the ground adjacent to the Abbey door; a true, hearty, English shout, such as no other nation on the earth can give, and the royal procession was seen returning. All pressed as near as they could; and Richard of Woodville gained a place in front, where he waited calmly, uncovered, for the passing of the King.

On came the train, bishops and abbots, priests and nobles, the pages, the knights, the bearers of the royal emblems; but all eyes were turned to one person, as—with a step, not haughty, but calm and firm, such as might well accord with a heart fixed and confident to keep the solemn vows so lately made in scrupulous fidelity; with a brow elevated by high and noble purposes, more than by the splendour of the crown it bore; and with an eye lightening with genius and

soul—Henry of Monmouth returned towards his palace, amidst the gratulating acclamations of his people.

Richard of Woodville saw Hal of Hadnock in the whole bearing of the monarch, as he had seen the prince in the bearing of Hal of Hadnock, and he murmured to himself, "He is the same. 'Tis but the dress is altered, either in mind or body. Excluded from the tasks of royalty, he assumed a less noble guise; but still the man was the same."

As he thus thought, the King passed before him, looking to right and left upon the long lines of people that bordered his way, though, marching in his state, he distinguished no one by word or gesture. His eyes, indeed, fixed firmly for an instant upon Richard of Woodville, and a slight smile passed over his lip; but he went on without further notice; and the young gentleman turned, as soon as he had gone by, thinking, "I will seek some inn, and come to the palace to-morrow. To-day, it is in vain."

The pressure of the multitude, however, prevented him from moving for some time, and he was forced to remain till the whole of the procession had gone by. He then made his way out of the crowd, which gradually became less compact, though few retired altogether, the greater number waiting either to discuss the events of the day, or to see if any other amusements would be afforded to the people; but it was some time before the young gentleman could find his horses, for the movements of the people had forced them from the place where they had been left. Just as he was, at length, putting his foot in the stirrup, Ned Dyram pulled his sleeve, saying, "There is a King's page, my master, looking for some one in the crowd. Always give yourself a chance. It may be you he seeks."

"I think not," replied Richard of Woodville; "but you can join him and inquire, if you will."

The man instantly ran off at full speed; and, though soon forced to slacken his pace amongst the people, he in

the end reached the page and asked for whom he was looking.

"A gentleman in black," replied the boy, "named Richard of Woodville."

"Then there he is," answered Ned, pointing with his hand to where his master stood; and followed by the page, he walked quickly to the spot.

"If your name be Richard of Woodville, sir," said the boy, "the King will see you now, while he is putting off his heavy robes and taking some repose."

"I follow, young sir," replied Woodville; and, accompanying the page, he turned towards the palace, while Ned Dyram, after a moment's hesitation, pursued the same course as his master, "in order," as he said mentally, "always to give himself a chance."

Crossing through the great hall of the palace of Westminster, where so many a varied scene has been enacted in the course of English history, where joy and sorrow, mirth, merriment, pageantry, fear, despair, and the words of death, have passed for well nigh a thousand years, and do pass still, Richard of Woodville followed the page amidst tables and benches, serving-men, servers, guards and ushers, till they reached a small door at the left angle, which, when opened, displayed the first steps of a small stone staircase. Up these they took their way, and then, through a corridor thronged with attendants, past the open door of a large room on the right, in which mitres and robes, crosses and swords of state met the young gentleman's eye, to a door at the end, which the page opened. Within was a small antechamber containing several squires and pages in their tabards, waiting either in silence, or at most talking to each other in whispers. They made way for their comrade, and the gentleman he brought with him, to pass, and, approaching an opposite door, the boy knocked. No one answered; but the door was immediately opened; and Richard of Woodville was ushered into a bedchamber, where, seated in

a large chair, he found the King, attended by two men dressed in their habits of state. One of these had just given the visitor admission; but the other was engaged in pulling off the boots in which the monarch had walked to and from the Abbey, and in placing a pair of embroidered shoes upon his feet instead.

"Welcome, Richard of Woodville," said Henry, as soon as he beheld him; "so you have come to see Hal of Hadnock before you depart?"

"I have come to see my gracious sovereign, sire," replied Woodville, advancing and bending the knee to kiss his hand, "and to wish him health and long life to wear his crown, for his own honour and the happiness of his people."

"Nay, rise, Richard, rise," said Henry smiling kindly, "no court ceremonies here. And I will tell you, my good friend, that I do really believe there is not one of all those who have shouted on my path to-day, or sworn to support my throne, who more sincerely wishes my prosperity than yourself. But say, did you guess that Hal of Hadnock was the Prince of Wales?"

"I knew it, sire," replied Woodville, "from the first moment I saw you. I had served under your Grace's command in Wales."

"I suspected as much," replied the monarch, "from some words you let fall."

"I do beseech you, sire, to pardon me," continued Richard, "if I judged my duty wrongly; but I thought that so long as it was not your pleasure to give yourself your own state, it was my part to know you only as you seemed."

"And you did right, my friend," replied the King; "but were you not tempted to breathe the secret to any one?"

"To no one, sire," answered Woodville boldly, "not for my right hand would I have said one word to the best friend I had."

"You are wise and faithful, Richard of Woodville," said Henry gravely; "God send me many such."

"Here is the other mantle, sire," said the attendant who was dressing him, "will you permit me to unclasp that?"

Henry rose, and the man disengaged the royal mantle from his shoulders, replacing it with one less heavy, while the King continued his conversation with Woodville after a momentary interruption, repeating, "God send me many such; for if I judge rightly, I shall have need of strong arms, and wise heads, and noble hearts about me, Nor shall I fail to call for yours when I have need, my friend."

"Ah, sire," answered Woodville with a smile, "as far as a true heart and a strong arm may go, I can, perhaps, serve you; but for wise heads, I fear you must look elsewhere. I am but a singer of songs, you know, and a lover of old ballads."

"Like myself, Richard," replied Henry; "but none the worse for that. I know not why, but I always doubt the man that is not fond of music. 'Tis, perhaps, that I love it so well myself, that I cannot but think, he who does not, has some discordant principle in his heart that jars with sweet sounds. 'Tis to me a great refreshment also; and when I have been sad or tired with all this world's business, when my thoughts have grown misty, or my brain turned giddy, I have sat me down to the organ and played for a few moments till all has become clear again; and I have risen as a man does from a calm sleep. As for poesy, indeed, I love it well enough, but I am no poet; and yet I think that a truly great poet is more powerful, and has a wider empire than a King. We monarchs rule men's bodies while we live; but their minds are beyond that sceptre, and death ends all our power. The poet rules their hearts, moulds their minds to his will, and stretches his arm over the wide future. He arrays the thoughts of countless multitudes for battle on the grand field of the world, and extends his empire to the end of time. Look at Homer—has

not the song of the blind Greek its influence yet? and so shall the verse of Chaucer be heard in years to come, long after the brow they have this day crowned shall have mouldered in the grave."

The thoughts which he had himself called up seemed to take entire possession of the King, and he remained gazing in deep meditation for a few minutes upon the glittering emblems of royalty which lay upon the table before him, while Richard of Woodville stood silent by his side, not venturing to interrupt his reverie. "Well, Richard," continued the King, at length rousing himself, "so you go to Burgundy? but hold yourself ready to join me when I have need."

"I am always ready, now or henceforward, sire," answered the young gentleman, "to serve you with the best of my poor ability; and the day will be a happy one that calls me to you. I only go to seek honour in another land, because I had so resolved before I met your highness, and because you yourself pronounced it best for me."

"And so I think it still," replied Henry. "I would myself advance you, Woodville, but for two reasons; first, I find every office near my person filled with old and faithful servants of the crown; and as they fall vacant, I would place in them men who have themselves won renown. Next, I think it better that your own arm and your own judgment should be your prop, rather than a King's favour; and as yet, there is here no opportunity. Besides, there are many other reasons why you will do well to go, in which I have not forgotten your own best interests. But keep yourself clear of long engagement to a foreign prince, lest your own should need you."

"That I most assuredly will, sire," answered Richard of Woodville. "I go but to take service as a volunteer, holding myself free to quit it when I see meet. I ask no pay from any one; and if I gain honour or reward, it shall be for what I have done, not for what I am to do."

"You are right, you are right," said Henry, "but have you anything to ask of me?"

"Nothing, sire," replied the young gentleman. "I did but wish to pay reverence to your state, and thank you for the gracious letters you have given me, before I went," and he took a step back as if to retire. But Henry made a sign, saying, "Stop! yet a moment; I have something to ask you. Lay the gloves down there, Surtis. Tighten this point a little, and then retire with Baynard."

The attendants did as they were bid; and Henry then inquired, "Is good Ned Dyram with you here in Westminster?"

"He is in the hall below, sire," answered Woodville; "and a most useful gift has he been to me already."

"A loan, Richard, a loan!" cried the King; "I shall claim him back one of these days, after he has served you in Burgundy. You will find he has faults as well as virtues; so have an eye to correct them. But, even now, as the country folk say, I have a mind to borrow my own horse. I want his services for three days, if you will lend him to me. You are not yet ready to set out?"

"Not yet, sire," replied Woodville; "but in one week more I hope to be on the sea."

"Well, then, send the man up to me, and he shall rejoin you in four days," answered Henry; "but let me see you to-morrow, my good friend, before you go home, for I would fain talk further with you. It is seldom that a King can meet one with whom he can speak his thoughts plainly, and I find already a difference that makes me sad. Command and obedience, arguments of state and policy, flattering acquiescence in my opinion whether right or wrong, praise, broad and coarse, or neat and half-concealed—of these I can have plenty, and to surfeit; but a friend into whose bosom one can pour forth one's ideas without restraint, whether they be sad or gay, is a rare thing in a court. So, for the present, fare you well, Richard. You will stay here

for the banquet in the hall, of course; and let me see you to-morrow morning, towards the hour of eight."

Richard of Woodville, as he well might, felt deeply gratified at the confidence which the King's words implied, and he answered, "I will not fail, sire, to attend you at that hour, with more gratitude for your good opinion than any other favour. At the banquet I will try to find a place, and will send Ned Dyram to you. Will you receive him now?"

"Yes, at once," replied the King, "for, good faith! these lords and bishops who are waiting for me will think me long. I will order you a place below. As to Ned Dyram, he shall rejoin you soon. There is no way in which he may not be useful to you; for there is scarce an earthly chance for which his ready wit is not prepared. I met him first studying alchemy with a poor wretch who, in pursuit of science, had blown all his wealth up the chimney of his furnace, and could no longer keep this boy. I found him next in an armourer's shop, hammering at hard iron, and thence I took him. He has a thousand qualities, some bad, some good. I think him honest; but his tongue is somewhat too free; and that which the wild prince might laugh at, might not chime with the dignity of the crown. He will learn better in your train; but, at the present, I have an errand for him—so send him to me quickly."

Richard of Woodville bowed and withdrew; and, finding his way down to the hall, he called Ned Dyram—who was in full activity, aiding the royal officers to set out the tables—and told him to go directly to the King. The man laughed, and ran off to fulfil the command; and about three-quarters of an hour elapsed before the monarch appeared in the hall, which, by that time, was nearly filled with guests invited to the banquet. He was followed by the train of high nobles and churchmen, whom Woodville had seen waiting in a chamber above; and the numerous tables, were soon crowded.

One of the royal servants placed Richard of Woodville according to his rank; the banquet, with all its ceremonies, was somewhat long in passing. The lower part of the chamber was filled with minstrels, musicians, and attendants; music, as usual, accompanied the feast; but, ever and anon, from the court before the palace and the neighbouring streets, were heard loud shouts and laughter, and bursts of song, showing that the merriment and revelry of the multitude were still kept up, while the King and his nobles were feasting within.

Thus, when the banquet was over, the monarch gone from the hall, and Richard of Woodville, with the rest of the guests, issued forth into the court, he was not surprised to find a gay and joyous scene without, the whole streets and roads filled with people, and every one giving himself up to joy and diversion. The gates of the court were thrown open, the populace admitted to the very doors of the palace, and a crowd of several hundred persons assembled round a spot in the centre, where a huge pile of dry wood had been lighted for the august ceremony of roasting an ox whole, which was duly superintended by half a dozen white-capped cooks, with a whole army of scullions and turnspits. Butts of strong beer stood in various corners; and a fountain, of four streams, flowed with wine at the side next to the Abbey. In one spot, people were jostling and pushing each other to get at the ale or wine; in another they were dancing gaily to the sound of a viol; and farther on was a tumbler, twisting himself into every sort of strange attitude for the amusement of the spectators. Loud shouts and exclamations, peals of laughter, the sounds of a thousand different musical instruments playing as many different tunes, with voices singing and others crying wares of several sorts, prepared for the celebration of the day, made a strange and not very melodious din; but there was an air of festivity and rejoicing, of fun and good-humour, in the whole, that compensated for the noise and the crowd.

Richard of Woodville had given orders for his horses to be taken to an inn at Charing, while waiting in the hall before the banquet; and he now proceeded on foot, through the crowd in the palace courts, towards the gates. It was a matter of some difficulty to obtain egress; for twilight was now coming on, and the multitude were flocking from the sights which had been displayed in the more open road to Charing during the last two or three hours, to witness the roasting of the ox, and to obtain some of the slices which were to be distributed about the hour of nine.

At length, however, he found himself in freer air; but still, every four or five yards, he came upon a gay group, either standing and talking to each other, or gathered round a show, or some singer or musician. It was one constant succession of faces, some young, some old, some pretty, some ugly, but all of them strange to Richard of Woodville. Nevertheless, more than once he met the same merry salutations which he had been treated to when on horseback; and, as he paused here and there, gazing at this or that gay party, he was twice asked to join in the dance, and still more frequently required to contribute to the payment of a poor minstrel with his pipe or cithern.

—G. P. R. James, *Agincourt.*

XII

The Beginning of the English Defeat in France

"SIRS," the Mareschal de Boussac was saying, "I have received advice from Chinon this morning, that the Maid slept at Tours last night, and is even now on her way to us."

"Who or what is the Maid," said the Admiral scornfully, "that her coming should be of any moment to us? She does not supersede you in the command, I suppose?"

"That is as may be," returned De Boussac. "The King has given her a banner, and she seems to be coming, in some sort, as his delegate."

"As well one as the other of them, I think," said La Hire bluntly. "The King's field orders would do us no good, but his presence would animate the troops—this girl's interference is impertinent; but the men believe her to be inspired, and, therefore, will fight under her as if possessed."

"I am not going to resign my baton to her, though," said De Boussac, "so I hope she may not find herself in a false position."

"What matters it how the men's spirits are raised?" said La Hire. "Already many who had gone home are re-assuming their arms for their country's cause; they only wait for her to cheer and animate them."

"Animate them and welcome," said the Mareschal, "but to undertake anything in the nature of command will be

simply ridiculous. I, for one, am not going to be led by a petticoat."

"She wears male attire," observed De Retz; "with her hair flowing over it, I understand, tied by a string or something."

"What is her retinue?" said the Admiral.

"Two or three lances," replied De Boussac, "a chaplain, a squire, two pages, and a *maître d'hôtel*."

"Her entry will be simple and unostentatious," said De Loré ironically.

"That depends," said De Retz.

"Is she noble?"

"I am not sure how her name is spelt. I rather think it is only Darc."

"Bertrand de Poulengey," observed De Loré, "who escorted her across the country, is as true a son of chivalry as ever lived. He is one of the King's equerries of the stable."

"He wears her colours of course?"

"White is her colour, I understand. She wears white armour, a white surcoat, and has a white banner."

"We must give her a good reception, at any rate," said De Boussac, "since the King so wills it. Good quarters and a good table. Who knows but that with this she may be content, as a good little girl should be, and leave us to do what is, after all, only men's work."

"Only," said La Hire, smiling a little, "we men have not been able to relieve Orleans."

"Nor will she, nor will she," returned the Marshal quickly. "Notwithstanding all this foolery, nothing will be done. It is a grievous thing, sirs, but Orleans must fall!"

Though the chiefs had so little relish for her assistance, they were forced to yield some outward conformity to the spirit of the citizens, who were in a tumult of joy at the news of Joan's approach. When, therefore, she drew near to Blois, she saw them coming forth to meet her with every

outward demonstration of respect, while the hearty, genuine cordiality of the multitude expressed itself in shouts that rent the air. As usual, her first object was the cathedral, whither she repaired, armed, but bareheaded, attended by an immense concourse of people. The citizens were forward to show their best hospitality to her and her train; but her severe rule let her do little justice to their feast. She inquired, according to her wont, for some worthy dame of avouched respectability as her hostess, and was assured that she was to be the guest of the most honourable and esteemed lady in the town. She bade Father Pasquerel organize processions for the morrow, and sent one of her heralds to beg Mareschal de Boussac would come to speak to her without delay. He did so, accompanied by La Hire.

"Beau sire," said she, "you know my mission and my authority. I trust you are ready to escort the provisions to Orleans."

"All in good time, maiden," replied Mareschal de Boussac lightly. "It is our intention so to do; but it will be no easy enterprise in the face of the English, flushed with recent success."

"It will be your turn now," replied she, "to be flushed with success; for you will go forward in the name of the Lord—and at once!"

"We must talk of earthly things now," observed De Boussac, with impatience; "and with respect to the convoy, it is im——"

"Important that it should proceed without delay," said Joan, "for the citizens are weak with hunger."

"Rest content," said De Boussac; "the men of Orleans shall be succoured——"

"Yes; but at once," insisted Joan; "and along the northern bank."

"My dear child," interrupted De Boussac, with something of kindness in his tone, "what should you know of

tactics? The Count de Dunois has expressly bidden us to follow the south bank. Leave these things to men who have studied them all their lives——"

"Only you have not relieved Orleans," she put in.

"That's a stale answer," said he impatiently. "To proceed along the northern bank of the Loire would be highly dangerous, and we should inevitably be cut off. I have no right to throw away the lives of the King's subjects in that way, nor any mind to risk my own in what would be mere folly. Content yourself with animating us by your presence, and cheering the men onward, and we will proceed, fair and softly, along the southern bank, and through the province of Sologne, where the bastilles of the English are weaker and worse guarded."

"Nay, but," said Joan, "I will go with you along the north bank, or not at all."

"This is sheer obstinacy," said De Boussac, heating, "and shows nothing but wrong-headedness. You want to provoke me to throw down my baton, I suppose."

"No," said Joan, "I want you to carry succours to Orleans along the north bank. That is all."

"All? bless my soul!"

"My good girl——" interposed La Hire.

"Dear captain," said she to him, "do you believe me sent by Heaven or not?"

He was silent.

"I, Joan Darc, know nothing of the matter. I am simply sent as a messenger, to lead you to victory. If you do not believe in me, I have no more to say."

"Well, but I do believe in you," grumbled De Boussac; "at least the King does, which is to the same effect."

"And do not the soldiers?"

"Oh, yes——"

"Who put it into their hearts? May it not have been the Holy Spirit? May not the Lord have chastised the nation for its sins by these sad reverses, and may He not

be willing and desirous to show mercy, if so be we will but yield us humbly and penitently to His guidance, though it be but by the hand of a little child?"

"Oh, if you are going to talk in that way——"

"Ah, fair sir, believe in Him as I do!"

"I wish *I* did," exclaimed La Hire, with an oath. "Oh, upon my honour, I didn't mean to swear!"

"Maid, you are very coaxing and very persuasive——" began the Marshal.

"No," said Joan bluntly, "I scorn to be either."

"Ah, well; you must be tired with your journey. Pray, how did you leave his Majesty?"

"Very anxious that you should relieve Orleans. He expects it."

"I hope his expectations will be gratified. Meanwhile, we will relieve you of our presence; *that* will be a seasonable relief at any rate. So fair a lady must need to lay aside her armour——"

"Sir, I am no lady, nor yet fair, and I shall wear armour till Orleans is saved and the King crowned. Then I will go back to my sheep."

"Little girl, you are brave," said La Hire admiringly.

De Boussac gave a kind of snort; and, bowing low, took his leave. La Hire paused for a moment.

"I shall see you in the morning," said he.

"In church, then," said Joan, "for that is where I shall be; and afterwards in the camp."

He hastened after the Mareschal, who was striding towards his quarters.

"What say you to this girl?" began he. "There's a mighty air of inspiration about her."

"Oh! she would talk one dead," said De Boussac. "That's the worst of people who have no manners."

"If she has no manners, it follows that she has not bad manners," observed La Hire; "and I do not see that manners, good or bad, have much to do with it."

"Only this, that she will not hear what is to be said on the other side, and, whatever may be alleged, passes it over and returns to the original thesis—that we must march at once, and along the north bank."

"How do you mean to put her off?" asked La Hire.

"Simply, by never minding her."

"That won't relieve Orleans, though, as she said."

"And as you said before her, my friend. I'm sick of that stale answer."

"I don't see what is to be done, though," said La Hire. The other made no reply, but walked on, his armour clanging at every step.

"What do you mean to do?" said La Hire.

The Mareschal replied—

> "Lead her a dance
> All about France,
> Out of France into Spain,
> And then back again."

La Hire laughed, but said, "I don't think that will do."

"I'll try it, however," said the Mareschal. "And now, will you sup with me?"

"Well, you know I live by rule; but the rule is, never to refuse a good invitation."

So they both laughed, and turned into De Boussac's lodging.

De Boussac readily acceded to Joan's desire, that a letter should be written to the English chiefs before Orleans, summoning them to yield to King Charles all the cities they held in his realm. Instead of writing "restore to the King," however, his secretary wrote "restore to the Maid," which she afterwards complained of.

This letter was received with scorn and derision by the English captains, who returned for answer that they would burn the herald who brought it, as coming from a sorceress and witch. Notwithstanding this unknightly threat, however,

which was not put into execution, an uncomfortable feeling of dismay and distrust arose in their minds as to her authority and mission; and the soldiers, especially, being more ignorant and superstitious than their masters, were quick to believe that she was commissioned from on high, or leagued with the powers of darkness.

Meanwhile, De Boussac, loath to encounter the English, yet wearied by the pertinacity with which Joan urged him to advance, really practised the artifice he had proposed to La Hire; and, announcing that all was ready for the march, started with some of his troops and provisions, crossed the Loire with the Maid, and yet had the art to persuade her they were keeping along the northern bank. La Hire's heart smote him for joining in the deceit; and as De Poulengey and De Metz had not been of her council, they knew not she was in error.

For the greater part of three days therefore they wandered up and down the dreary wilderness of Sologne, than which it is impossible to conceive a district more arid, monotonous, and unproductive. Nothing met the eye but sand and furze, gravel-pits and lizards; and the poor inhabitants seemed brutish and wretched.

"You will see Orleans," said De Boussac as they rode on, "from the very next bridge"; and encouraged by this, she rode on.

"Oh!" exclaimed she, in indignation and grief, "the river lies between us! You have deceived me after all!"

"Forgive me, maiden," said De Boussac. "It was by Dunois' order; and the feint was necessary."

"It was *not*!" said she, with flashing eyes. "You have betrayed your trust!"

De Boussac made no answer.

"See," cried La Hire, "there is Dunois with yonder boats. Let us ride down to hear what he has to say."

Dunois waved his hand joyously to them as they approached, and sprang ashore.

"Right welcome, Mareschal!" cried he. "And you too, La Hire! Maid! you need no herald to announce you!"

"Are you the Count de Dunois?" said she.

"I am," said he, "and very glad of your coming."

"Was it indeed you," said she, "who directed us to come by Sologne instead of Beauce?"

"Such was," said he, "the advice of our wisest captains."

"They were wrong, they were wrong," said Joan. "The Lord is wiser than they. You thought to deceive me, but you have only outwitted yourselves. Let no time be lost now in embarking the supplies."

"But a storm is coming on," expostulated De Boussac, "and the wind is contrary."

"The wind will *change*, faint-hearted man!" said she impetuously.

"Well, well," said he, "there will be a downright squall, but, since you insist, I will give the necessary orders."

And in a few minutes all was activity and commotion.

"Marshal!" cried Dunois excitedly, "*the wind has changed!*"

De Boussac started, and looked about him. "It certainly has," said he.

The squall which the Mareschal had spoken of now came on in full force, bending the heads of trees violently to the ground as it swept on its course. Vivid lightning rent the clouds, and thunder rolled overhead, and though it was scarcely sunset, the gloom amounted almost to darkness. The advantage this gave them in embarking close to the English Fort of St. Jean le Blanc, and the impressive fact of the wind having suddenly changed in their favour, were improved on by Father Pasquerel and the priests of Blois, whose voices were heard above the storm, animating the soldiers by their exhortations.

"Mareschal, you are coming with us?" cried Dunois eagerly.

"Certainly not," replied De Boussac, "my duty is to return for the other convoy."

Dunois looked exasperated.

"Are none of you coming to help us?" said he, his deep blue eyes glancing from one face to another.

"Faith, I will," said La Hire. "Come, Mareschal, give me a couple of hundred lances."

"So be it, then," said De Boussac, "only I call it downright madness. However, good luck attend you. You are embarking under the very nose of St. Jean le Blanc, and the English will pour their fire into you directly you are off. Your beef and mutton will soon be eaten, and then you will thank me for having gone for a fresh supply. Some of those barges will go down if you overload them so. Was ever such a hurricane? I can scarce hear myself speak. Farewell, Maid! You are a stout heart, at all events. Cheer up the besieged, and say I am bringing them succours. Mind that horse, sirrah! you'll throw him down. He'll walk the plank well enough if you are steady. Dunois, I really think—ha, ha! there goes my plume. Well, the English will hardly come out and look after you in such weather as this, that's one good thing. Adieu, De Poulengey; adieu, De Metz: ye are true hearts. Farewell, La Hire, old friend! Father Pasquerel, since you will have the priests of Blois, see to it they do the only good they can, and keep up the excitement."

De Boussac, thus talking while others were doing, watched the embarkation and then instantly marched his troops homewards, telling something within him that he was doing the very best thing possible—which that something within him seemed rather to doubt.

Meanwhile, the heavily freighted barges were sailing before the wind under cover of the advancing night; and Dunois' spirits rose like those of a boy. He was now twenty-five years of age, and the bravest knight in France; inheriting much of his mother's beauty, but having no

earthly parent to thank for his goodness and spirit. It would be very easy to sink him into a mere hero of romance, a purpose I utterly disdain: his own good deeds are his praise.

"Maid!" said he, "you will save us. God shows you to be His angel of deliverance by making the winds speed us on our way, and concealing us from the foe by clouds of darkness."

"But how bad it was of the Mareschal to go back," said Joan, "and to deceive me by coming through Sologne!"

"You must forgive him," said Dunois. "We really had pre-arranged it."

The storm had now spent its violence, and the moon now and then appeared for a moment, as if travelling fast through the troubled clouds that swept the sky—fitfully revealing the dark outlines of the city, the cathedral, and the heavy old nineteen-arched bridge, the chasm in which was frowned over on the southern side by Sir William Gladsdale's fort, "Les Tournelles."

"There lies Glacidas," said Dunois, in a low voice; "and there, on the bank, is the famous bastion the English call 'London.'"

Joan and her companions listened with breathless interest as he related, in subdued tones, the story of the siege, and strained their eyes as though they would pierce the gloom as he pointed out the dimly-discerned objects. A light that twinkled on the bank was suddenly concealed: they thought they were watched, but they floated quietly on. Joan asked whether there were any good woman in Orleans with whom she could lodge.

"A lodging is provided for you," replied Dunois, "in the Rue du Tabourg, at the house of the Duke of Orleans' treasurer, Jacques Bouchier, as respectable a man as any in the town. His house is close to the town wall, by the Porte Renard; and his wife Colette, and his daughter Charlotte, will treat you like a daughter of the house."

"It was what the Italians call a supreme moment."

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"But is there room," said Joan, "for my brothers, for the Sires De Poulengey and De Metz, and for my other attendants?"

"Yes, yes," said Dunois, "there is accommodation for you all."

"What is that?" said she, starting violently, as a heavy sound broke the stillness.

"That," said he, smiling, "is a cannon shot, which we have become accustomed to, though you, perhaps, hear it for the first time."

She said, "It is very terrible, and very grand."

They were now winding among the low, long sand-banks or islands that began to be seen dimly heaving in narrow, yellow lines from the river, and on which, if they had fixed, they might have remained till morning, to fall an unresisting prey to the English. Happily this fate was averted by careful pilotage; and as they stole along, nearer and yet nearer the city, and within range of the English guns, the silence was so intense that Joan's quickened ear could distinctly catch the low ripple of the water against the side of the barge, making soft music. It was what the Italians call a supreme moment. All at once they were startled, as if by a shot, by all the church clocks sounding the first stroke of eight, led by the heavy-booming cathedral bell—

"Swinging slow with solemn roar."

At the same time, the English drums began to beat to quarters—a summons evidently responded to in an unruly manner by several convivial spirits. Guard was relieved; flambeaux and lanterns gleamed from tower, bridge, and bastion, and sent long, perpendicular, red reflections to the river below. On the town side of the Loire was heard a continuous, hollow murmur as of thousands of persons speaking under their breath; a woman's call in some distant street of "salt fish, salt fish!" that sounded like a wail or cry. No bark of dogs; they had all been eaten!

A little shock against the bank, a rope thrown, and they were fixed. A crowd of persons, who seemed to have been silently watching them, now pressed forward.

"Is she here? Where is she?" they eagerly whispered.

"Here; she is here," said Dunois, putting Joan into the extended arms of the brave old governor, De Gaucourt; and tears coursed down the old man's furrowed cheeks.

"God bless you, my dear!" was his homely welcome, as he took the unyielding steel-clad figure of the girl to his heart. She put her head on his shoulder for an instant, and gave one little quivering sob; for her feelings were highly wrought. But it would not do to weep then!

"The Maid is come! the Maid is come!" screamed several scarce human-sounding voices. Oh, what a cry rang through the famished city! It seemed to give one great sob, and then burst out into an ecstasy of rejoicing. But the sob and the laughter did not cease there: it rose wilder and louder; the sick and wounded dragged themselves from their beds to their casements, and leant out crying—"What is it? what is it?" "Joan the Maid! Joan the Maid!" "O merciful Father!"

The tumult grew wilder and wilder as the news spread to distant quarters. Every alley, court, and lane poured its tributary stream into the main streets. "Joan the Maid!" "Joan the Maid!" passed from mouth to mouth in frantic accents. "Blessed girl! where, where is she?" cried the women; and some of them, faint with hunger and long suspense, fell into hysterical fits of laughter; while men covered their faces and wept. All the church bells were set clanging, the cathedral became one blaze of light, and priests and choristers hurried on their surplices for "Te Deum." The English, startled at the uproar, were beating to arms; and now and then a rocket came whizzing through the air.

Meanwhile, every one was pressing to see, to touch the Maid, as, mounted on a noble white charger, whose hous-

ings swept the ground, she entered the gates (for she had landed outside the walls), and slowly made her way to the cathedral, with Dunois, on his black war-horse, on her left hand, and followed by "les vaillans seigneurs de la suite," and by the officers and soldiers of the garrison. The citizens, the troops, the women, the children, all held themselves delivered now she was among them, and were anxious to look on her, and touch her, as some sacred thing. Happy to have one glimpse of her glowing, kindly face, and bright eyes shining with tears, they carried home fabulous reports of her beauty. The tide rolled on to the cathedral, a far more ancient pile than now exists under that name, and rich in storied windows of painted glass. There they sang "Te Deum," as well they might.

Had it not been for the lean cheeks and hollow eyes of all and sundry, it might have been thought the old city was wholly given over to joy and festivity. But it was the joy of hungry people who trusted to be fed on the morrow, and of citizens, closed seven months within their city gates, who expected soon to be free.

The Sire de Gaucourt had made a great supper for Joan, and would have led her to it as soon as the service was over; but she said, "Dear sir, I cannot feast in a starving city; the meat would choke me. Give my share to the poor; and, if it please you, let me go to my lodging."

The governor looked a little disappointed, but said,—

"Well, well; since ye will have it so, it shall even be as ye say."

So she rode, with Dunois still at her side, and her train close following, to the Rue du Tabourg; and the people shouted "Vive la Pucelle!" and "Vive Dunois!"

Jacques Bouchier and his wife were well pleased to receive so honourable a guest. The house no longer stands, though one on its site is shown for it. The table was covered with the whitest of damask, and with some old-fashioned pieces of plate; and De Poulengey and De Metz

were not sorry, when Dunois was gone, to see one or two smoking hot dishes make their appearance.

But no hospitality could tempt Joan to do more than mix some wine and water in a silver cup, and break some pieces of bread into it, on which she supped; and this was the first food she had taken that day. It had been arranged that she was to sleep with Charlotte, Bouchier's eldest daughter; and, as she retired with her for the night, De Poulengey, holding out his hand to her with a cheerful smile, said,—

"I think you have reason to be satisfied with this day's work."

"Ah! what do you call work?" said she. "Mine is but just beginning."

—Miss Manning, *Noble Purpose.*

XIII

At the Court of King Edward

THE Tower of London, more consecrated to associations of gloom and blood than those of gaiety and splendour, was, nevertheless, during the reign of Edward IV., the seat of a gallant and gorgeous court. That King, from the first to the last so dear to the people of London, made it his principal residence when in his metropolis; and its ancient halls and towers were then the scene of many a brawl and galliard. As Warwick's barge now approached its huge walls, rising from the river, there was much that might either animate or awe, according to the mood of the spectator. The King's barge, with many lesser craft, reserved for the use of the courtiers, gay with awnings and streamers, and painting, and gilding, lay below the wharfs, not far from the gate of St. Thomas, now called the Traitor's Gate. On the walk raised above the battlemented wall of the inner ward, not only paced the sentries, but there dames and knights were inhaling the noonday breezes, and the gleam of their rich dresses of cloth of gold glanced upon the eye at frequent intervals from tower to tower. Over the vast round turret behind the Traitor's Gate, now called "The Bloody Tower," floated cheerily in the light wind the royal banner. Near the Lion's Tower two or three of the keepers of the menagerie, in the King's livery, were leading forth, by a strong chain, the huge white bear that made one of the boasts of the collection, and was an

especial favourite with the King and his brother Richard. The sheriffs of London were bound to find this grisly minion his chain and his cord, when he deigned to amuse himself with bathing or "fishing" in the river; and several boats, filled with gapemouthed passengers, lay near the wharf, to witness the diversions of Bruin. These folk set up a loud shout of "A Warwick!—a Warwick!" "The stout earl, and God bless him!" as the gorgeous barge shot towards the fortress. The earl acknowledged their greeting by vailing his plumed cap, and passing the keepers with a merry allusion to their care of his own badge, and a friendly compliment to the grunting bear, he stepped ashore, followed by his attendant squire. Now, however, he paused a moment, and a more thoughtful shade passed over his countenance, as, glancing his eye carelessly aloft towards the standard of King Edward, he caught sight of the casement in the neighbouring tower, of the very room in which the sovereign of his youth, Henry the Sixth, was a prisoner, almost within hearing of the revels of his successor; then, with a quick stride, he hurried on through the vast court, and, passing the White Tower, gained the royal lodge. Here, in the great hall, he left his companion, amidst a group of squires and gentlemen, to whom he formally presented the Nevile as his friend and kinsman, and was ushered by the deputy-chamberlain (with an apology for the absence of his chief, the Lord Hastings, who had gone abroad to fly his falcon) into the small garden, where Edward was idling away the interval between the noon and evening meals—repasts to which already the young King inclined with that intemperate zest and ardour which he carried into all his pleasures, and which finally destroyed the handsomest person, and embruted one of the most vigorous intellects of the age.

The garden, if bare of flowers, supplied their place by the various and brilliant-coloured garbs of the living beauties assembled on its straight walks and smooth sward.

Under one of those graceful cloisters, which were the taste of the day, and had been recently built and gaily decorated, the earl was stopped in his path by a group of ladies playing at closheys (ninepins) of ivory; and one of these fair dames, who excelled the rest in her skill, had just bowled down the central or crowned pin—the king of the closheys. This lady, no less a person than Elizabeth, the Queen of England, was then in her thirty-sixth year—ten years older than her lord—but the peculiar fairness and delicacy of her complexion, still preserved to her beauty the aspect and bloom of youth. From a lofty head-gear, embroided with fleur-de-lis, round which wreathed a light diadem of pearls, her hair of the pale yellow considered then the perfection of beauty, flowed so straight and so shining down her shoulders, almost to the knees, that it seemed like a mantle of gold. The baudekin stripes (blue and gold) of her tunic attested her royalty. The blue court-pie of satin was bordered with ermine, and the sleeves, fitting close to an arm of exquisite contour, shone with seed-pearls. Her features were straight and regular, yet would have been insipid but for an expression rather of cunning than intellect; and the high arch of her eye-brows, with a slight curve downward of a mouth otherwise beautiful, did not improve the expression by an addition of something supercilious and contemptuous rather than haughty or majestic.

"My lord of Warwick," said Elizabeth, pointing to the fallen closhey, "what would my enemies say if they heard I had toppled down the King?"

"They would content themselves with asking which of your grace's brothers you would place in his stead," answered the hardy earl, unable to restrain the sarcasm.

The Queen blushed, and glanced round her ladies with an eye which never looked direct or straight upon its object, but wandered sidelong with a furtive and stealthy expression, that did much to obtain for her the popular

character of falseness and self-seeking. Her displeasure was yet more increased by observing the ill-concealed smile which the taunt had called forth.

"Nay, my lord," she said, after a short pause, "we value the peace of our roiaulme too much for so high an ambition. Were we to make a brother even the prince of the closheys, we should disappoint the hopes of a Nevile."

The earl disdained pursuing the war of words, and, answering coldly, "The Neviles are more famous for making ingrates than asking favours. I leave your highness to the closheys," turned away, and strode towards the King, who, at the opposite end of the garden, was reclining on a bench beside a lady, in whose ear, to judge by her downcast and blushing cheek, he was breathing no unwelcome whispers.

"Mort-Dieu!" muttered the earl, who was singularly exempt, himself, from the amorous follies of the day, and eyed them with so much contempt that it often obscured his natural downright penetration into character, and never more than when it led him afterwards to underrate the talents of Edward IV.,—"Mort-Dieu! if an hour before the battle of Touton some wizard had shown me in his glass this glimpse of the gardens of the tower, that giglet for a Queen, and that squire of dames for a King, I had not slain my black destrier (poor Malech!) that I might conquer or die for Edward Earl of March!"

"But see!" said the lady, looking up from the enamoured and conquering eyes of the King; "art thou not ashamed, my lord—the grim earl comes to chide thee for thy faithlessness to thy Queen, whom he loves so well."

"Pasque-Dieu! as my cousin, Louis of France, says or swears," answered the King, with an evident petulance in his altered voice,—"I would that Warwick could be only worn with one's armour! I would as lief try to kiss through my vizor as hear him talk of glory and Touton, and King John and poor Edward II., because I am not always in

"Was reclining on a bench beside a lady."

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mail. Go! leave us, sweet bonnibel! we must brave the bear alone!"

The lady inclined her head, drew her hood round her face, and striking into the contrary path from that in which Warwick was slowing striding, gained the group round the Queen, whose apparent freedom from jealousy, the consequence of cold affections and prudent calculation, made one principal cause of the empire she held over the powerful mind, but the indolent temper, of the gay and facile Edward.

The King rose as Warwick now approached him; and the appearance of these two eminent persons was in singular contrast. Warwick, though richly and even gorgeously attired—nay, with all the care which in that age was considered the imperative duty a man of station and birth owed to himself, held in lofty disdain whatever vagary of custom tended to cripple the movements or womanize the man. No loose flowing robes—no shoon half a yard long—no flaunting tawdriness of fringe and aiglet, characterized the appearance of the baron, who, even in peace, gave his dress a half-martial fashion.

But Edward, who, in common with all the princes of the House of York, carried dress to a passion, had not only reintroduced many of the most effeminate modes in vogue under William the Red King, but added to them whatever could tend to impart an almost oriental character to the old Norman garb. His gown (a womanly garment which had greatly superseded, with men of the highest rank, not only the mantle but the surcoat) flowed to his heels, trimmed with ermine, and broidered with large flowers of crimson wrought upon cloth of gold. Over this he wore a tippet of ermine, and a collar or necklace of uncut jewels set in filagree gold; the nether limbs were, it is true, clad in the more manly fashion of tight-fitting hosen, but the folds of the gown, as the day was somewhat fresh, were drawn around so as to conceal the only part of the dress

which really betokened the male sex. To add to this unwarlike attire, Edward's locks, of a rich golden colour, and perfuming the whole air with odours, flowed not in curls, but straight to his shoulders, and the cheek of the fairest lady in his court might have seemed less fair beside the dazzling clearness of a complexion, at once radiant with health and delicate with youth. Yet, in spite of all this effeminacy, the appearance of Edward IV. was *not* effeminate. From this it was preserved, not only by a stature little less commanding than that of Warwick himself, and of great strength and breadth of shoulder, but also by features, beautiful indeed, but pre-eminently masculine—large and bold in their outline, and evincing by their expression all the gallantry and daring characteristics of the hottest soldier, next to Warwick, and, without any exception, the ablest captain of the age.

"And welcome—a merry welcome, dear Warwick, and cousin mine," said Edward, as Warwick slightly bent his proud knee to his King; "your brother, Lord Montagu, has but left us. Would that our court had the same joyaunce for you as for him."

"Dear and honoured my liege," answered Warwick, his brow smoothing at once—for his affectionate though hasty and irritable nature was rarely proof against the kind voice and winning smile of his young sovereign—"could I ever serve you at the court as I can with the people you would not complain that John of Montagu was a better courtier than Richard of Warwick. But each to his calling. I depart to-morrow for Calais, and thence to King Louis. And, surely, never envoy or delegate had better chance to be welcome than one empowered to treat of an alliance that will bestow on a prince, deserving, I trust, his fortunes, the sister of the bravest sovereign in Christian Europe."

"Now, out on thy flattery, my cousin; though I must needs own I provoked it by my complaint of thy courtiership. But thou hast learned only half thy business, good

Warwick; and it is well Margaret did not hear thee. Is not the prince of France more to be envied for winning a fair lady than having a fortunate soldier for his brother-in-law?"

"My liege," replied Warwick, smiling, "thou knowest I am a poor judge of a lady's fair cheek, though indifferently well skilled as to the valour of a warrior's stout arm. Algates, the Lady Margaret is indeed worthy in her excellent beauties to become the mother of brave men!"

"And that is all we can wring from thy stern lip, man of iron. Well, that must content us. But to more serious matters." And the King, leaning his hand on the earl's arm, and walking with him slowly to and fro the terrace, continued, "Knowest thou not, Warwick, that this French alliance, to which thou hast induced us, displeases sorely our good traders of London?"

"Mort-Dieu!" returned Warwick bluntly; "and what business have the flat-caps with the marriage of a King's sister? Is it for them to breathe garlick on the alliances of Bourbons and Plantagenets? Faugh! You have spoiled them, good my lord King—you have spoiled them by your condescensions. Henry IV. staled not his majesty to consultations with the mayor of his city. Henry V. gave the knighthood of the Bath to the heroes of Agincourt, not to the vendors of cloth and spices."

"Ah, my poor knights of the Bath!" said Edward good-humouredly, "wilt thou never let that sore scar quietly over? Ownest thou not that the men had their merits?"

"What the merits were, I weet not," answered the earl; "unless, peradventure, their wives were comely and young."

"Thou wrongest me, Warwick," said the King, carelessly; "Dame Cook was awry, Dame Philips a grandmother, Dame Jocelyn had lost her front teeth, and Dame Waer saw seven ways at once! But thou forgettest, man, the occasion of those honours—the eve before Elizabeth was crowned—and it was policy to make the city of London have a share

in her honours. As to the rest," pursued the King, earnestly and with dignity, "I and my house have owed much to London. When the peers of England, save thee and thy friends, stood aloof from my cause, London was ever loyal and true. Thou seest not, my poor Warwick, that these burgesses are growing up into power by the decline of the orders above them. And if the sword is the monarch's appeal for his right, he must look to contented and honoured industry for his buckler in peace. This is policy—policy, Warwick; and Louis XI. will tell thee the same truths, harsh though they grate in a warrior's ear."

The earl bowed his haughty head, and answered shortly, but with a touching grace, "Be it ever thine, noble King, to rule as it likes thee; and mine to defend with my blood even what I approve not with my brain. But if thou doubtest the wisdom of this alliance, it is not too late yet. Let me dismiss my following, and cross not the seas. Unless thy heart is with the marriage, the ties I would form are threads and cobwebs."

"Nay," returned Edward irresolutely: "in these great state matters thy wit is elder than mine; but men do say the Count of Charolois is a mighty lord, and the alliance with Burgundy will be more profitable to staple and mart."

"Then, in God's name, so conclude it!" said the earl hastily, but with so dark a fire in his eyes that Edward, who was observing him, changed countenance; "only ask me not, my liege, to advance such a marriage. The Count of Charolois knows me as his foe—shame were mine did I shun to say where I love, where I hate. That proud dullard once slighted me when we met at his father's court, and the wish next to my heart is to pay back my affront with my battle-axe. Give thy sister to the heir of Burgundy, and forgive me if I depart to my castle of Middleham."

Edward, stung by the sharpness of this reply, was about to answer as became his majesty of King, when Warwick more deliberately resumed: "Yet think well, Henry of

Windsor is thy prisoner, but his cause lives in Margaret and his son. There is but one power in Europe that can threaten thee with aid to the Lancastrians, that power is France. Make Louis thy friend and ally, and thou givest peace to thy life and thy lineage; make Louis thy foe, and count on plots and stratagems, and treason—uneasy days and sleepless nights. Already thou hast lost one occasion to secure that wiliest and most restless of princes in rejecting the hand of the Princess Bona. Happily this loss can now be retrieved. But alliance with Burgundy is war with France—war more deadly because Louis is a man who declares it not—a war carried on by intrigue and bribe, by spies and minions, till some disaffection ripens the hour when young Edward of Lancaster shall land on thy coasts, with the Oriflamme and the Red Rose, with French soldiers and English malcontents. Wouldst thou look to Burgundy for help? Burgundy will have enough to guard its own frontiers from the gripe of Louis the Sleepless. Edward, my King, my pupil in arms; Edward, my loved, my honoured liege, forgive Richard Nevile his bluntness, and let not his faults stand in bar of his counsels."

"You are right, as you are ever, safeguard of England and pillar of my state," said the King frankly, and pressing the arm he still held, "Go to France and settle all as thou wilt."

Warwick bent low and kissed the hand of his sovereign. "And," said he, with a slight, but a sad smile, "when I am gone my liege will not repent, will not misthink me, will not listen to my foes, nor suffer merchant and mayor to sigh him back to the mechanics of Flanders?"

"Warwick, thou deemest ill of thy King's kingliness."

"Not of thy kingliness, but that same gracious quality of yielding to counsel which bows this proud nature to submission often makes me fear for thy firmness when thy will is won through thy heart. And now, good my liege, forgive me one sentence more. Heaven forfend that I

should stand in the way of thy princely favours. A King's countenance is a sun that should shine on all. But bethink thee well, the barons of England are a stubborn and haughty race; chafe not thy most puissant peers by too cold a neglect of their past services, and too lavish a largess to new men."

"Thou aimest at Elizabeth's kin," interrupted Edward, withdrawing his hand from his minister's arm; "and I tell once for all times that I would rather sink to my earldom of March, with a subject's right to honour where he loves, than wear crown and wield sceptre without a King's unquestioned prerogative to ennoble the line and blood of one he has deemed worthy of his throne. As for the barons, with whose wrath thou threatenest me, I banish them not. If they go in gloom from my court, why, let them chafe themselves sleek again!"

"King Edward," said Warwick moodily, "tried services merit not this contempt. It is not as the kith of the Queen that I regret to see lands and honour lavished upon men, rooted so newly to the soil that the first blast of the war-trump will scatter their greenness to the winds. But what sorrows me is to mark those who have fought against thee preferred to the stout loyalty that braved block and field for thy cause. Look round thy court; where are the men of bloody York and victorious Touton? Unrequited, sullen in their strongholds, begirt with their yeomen and their retainers. Thou standest—thou, the heir of York—almost alone (save where the Neviles—whom one day thy court will seek also to disgrace and discard—vex their old comrades in arms by their defection); thou standest almost alone among the favourites and minions of Lancaster. Is there no danger in proving to men that to have served thee is discredit, to have warred against thee is guerdon and grace?"

"Enough of this, cousin," replied the King, with an effort which preserved his firmness. "On this head we

cannot agree. Take what else thou wilt of royalty, make treaties and contract marriages, establish peace or proclaim war, but trench not on my sweetest prerogative to give and to forgive. And now, wilt thou tarry and sup with us? The ladies grow impatient of a commune that detains from their eyes the stateliest knight since the Round Table was chopped into firewood."

"No, my liege," said Warwick, whom flattery of this sort rather angered than soothed; "I have much yet to prepare. I leave your highness to fairer homage and more witching counsels than mine." So saying, he kissed the King's hand, and retired; and, passing the Queen and her ladies with a lowlier homage than that with which he had before greeted them, left the garden. Edward's eye followed him, musingly. The frank expression of his face vanished, and, with the deep breath of a man who is throwing a weight from his heart, he muttered,—

"He loves me—yes—but will suffer no one else to love me! This must end some day. I am weary of the bondage." And sauntering towards the ladies he listened in silence, but not apparently in displeasure, to his Queen's sharp sayings on the imperious mood and irritable temper of the iron-handed builder of his throne.

As Warwick passed the door that led from the garden he brushed by a young man, the baudekin stripes of whose vest announced his relationship to the King, and who, though far less majestic than Edward, possessed sufficient of family likeness to pass for a very handsome and comely person. But his countenance wanted the open and fearless expression which gave that of the King so masculine and heroic a character. The features were smaller, and less clearly cut, and to a physiognomical observer there was much that was weak and irresolute in the light blue eyes and the smiling lips, which never closed firmly over the teeth. He did not wear the long gown then so much in vogue, but his light figure was displayed to advantage by a

vest, fitting it exactly, descending half-way down the thigh, and trimmed at the border and the collar with ermine. The sleeves of the doublet were slit, so as to show the white lawn beneath, and adorned with aiglets and knots of gold. Over the left arm hung a rich jacket of furs and velvet, something like that adopted by the modern hussar. His hat or cap was high and tiara-like, with a single white plume, and the ribbon of the garter bound his knee. Though the dress of this personage was thus far less effeminate than Edward's, the effect of his appearance was infinitely more so—partly, perhaps, from a less muscular frame, and partly from his extreme youth. For George Duke of Clarence was then, though initiated not only in the gaieties, but all the intrigues of the court, only in his eighteenth year. Laying his hand, every finger of which sparkled with jewels, on the earl's shoulder—"Hold!" said the young prince in a whisper, "a word in thy ear, noble Warwick."

The earl, who, next to Edward, loved Clarence the most of his princely house, and who always found the latter as docile as the other (when humour or affection seized him) was intractable, relaxed into a familiar smile at the duke's greeting, and suffered the young prince to draw him aside from the groups of courtiers with whom the chamber was filled, to the leaning-places (as they were called) of a large mullion window. In the meanwhile, as they thus conferred, the courtiers interchanged looks, and many an eye of fear and hate was directed towards the stately form of the earl.

Amongst those opposed to the earl, and fit in all qualities to be the head of the new movement—if the expressive modern word be allowed us—stood at that moment in the very centre of the chamber, Anthony Woodville—in right of the rich heiress he had married, the Lord Scales. As when some hostile and formidable foe enters the meads where the flock grazes, the gazing herd gather slowly round their leader,—so grouped the Queen's faction slowly, and by

degrees, round this accomplished nobleman, at the prolonged sojourn of Warwick.

"Gramercy!" said the Lord Scales, in a somewhat affected intonation of voice, "the conjunction of the bear and the young lion is a parlous omen, for the which I could much desire we had a wise astrologer's reading."

"It is said," observed one of the courtiers, "that the Duke of Clarence much affects either the lands or the person of the Lady Isabel."

"A passably fair damozel," returned Anthony, "though a thought or so too marked and high in her lineaments, and wholly unlettered, no doubt: which were a pity, for George of Clarence hath some pretty taste in the arts and poesies. But as Occleve hath it—

"'Gold, silver, jewel, cloth, beddyng, array,'

would make gentle George amorous of a worse-featured face than high-nosed Isabel: 'strange to spell or rede,' as I would wager my best destrier to a tailor's hobby the damozel surely is."

"Notest thou yon gaudy popinjay?" whispered the Lord of St. John to one of his Touton comrades, as, leaning against the wall, they overheard the sarcasms of Anthony, and the laugh of the courtiers, who glassed their faces and moods to his; "is the time so out of joint that Master Anthony Woodville can vent his scurrile japes on the heiress of Salisbury and Warwick, in the King's chamber?"

"And prate of spelling and reading, as if they were the cardinal virtues," returned his sullen companion. "By my halidame, I have two fair daughters at home, who will lack husbands, I trow, for they can only spin and be chaste—two maidenly gifts out of bloom with the White Rose."

In the meanwhile, unwitting, or contemptuous of the attention they excited, Warwick and Clarence continued yet more earnestly to confer.

"No, George, no," said the earl, who, as the descendant

of John o' Gaunt, and of kin to the King's blood, maintained, in private, a father's familiarity with the princes of York, though on state occasions, and when in the hearing of others, he sedulously marked his deference for their rank —"no, George, calm and steady thy hot mettle, for thy brother's and England's sake. I grieve as much as thou to hear that the Queen does not spare even thee in her froward and unwomanly peevishness. But there is a glamour in this, believe me, that must melt away, soon or late, and our kingly Edward recover his senses."

"Glamour!" said Clarence; "thinkest thou, indeed, that her mother, Jacquetta, has bewitched the King? One word of thy belief in such spells, spread abroad amongst the people, would soon raise the same storm that blew Eleanor Cobham from Duke Humphrey's bed, along London streets in her penance-shift."

"Troth," said the earl, indifferently, "I leave such grave questions as these to prelate and priest; the glamour I spoke of is that of a fair face over a wanton heart; and Edward is not so steady a lover, that this should never wear out."

"It amates me much, noble cousin, that thou leavest the court in this juncture. The Queen's heart is with Burgundy —the city's hate is with France—and when once thou art gone, I fear that the King will be teased into mating my sister with the Count of Charolois."

"Ho!" exclaimed Warwick, with an oath so loud that it rung through the chamber, and startled every ear that heard it. Then, perceiving his indiscretion, he lowered his tone into a deep and hollow whisper, and griped the prince's arm, almost fiercely, as he spoke.

"Could Edward so dishonour my embassy—so palter and juggle with my faith—so flout me in the eyes of Christendom, I would—I would——" he paused, and relaxed his hold of the duke, and added, with an altered voice—"I would leave his wife and his lemans, and yon

things of silk, whom he makes peers (*that* is easy) but cannot make men—to guard his throne from the grandson of Henry V. But thy fears, thy zeal, thy love for me, dearest prince and cousin, make thee misthink Edward's kingly honour and knightly faith. I go with the sure knowledge that by alliance with France I shut the house of Lancaster from all hope of this roiaulme."

Without waiting for further parlance, the earl turned suddenly away, threw his cap on his towering head, and strode right through the centre of the whispering courtiers, who shrunk, louting low, from his haughty path, to break into a hubbub of angry exclamations, or sarcastic jests, at his unmannerly bearing, as his black plume disappeared in the arch of the vaulted door.

—Lord Lytton, *Last of the Barons.*

XIV

The King is Dead— Who Shall be King?

THE Earl of Lincoln was waiting intelligence from the field of Bosworth, in a palace he inhabited not far from Tottenham Court, a secluded habitation, surrounded by a garden and a high wall. This was an irksome situation for a warrior; but though his uncle loved, he distrusted him: his projected marriage with the Lady Elizabeth, would probably cause him again to be father of an heir to the crown, and knowing that Lincoln possessed, in the young Duke of York, a dangerous rival, he refused to allow him to take up arms against Richmond. Lord Lincoln was alone, pacing his large and vaulted hall in deep and anxious meditation. He, who with conscience for his rule, takes, or endeavours to take, the reins of fate into his own hands, must experience frequent misgivings; and often feel, that he wheels near the edge of a giddy precipice, down which the tameless steeds he strives to govern, may, in an instant, hurl him and all dependent upon his guidance. The simple feeling of compassion, arising from the seeing childhood lose its buoyancy in undue confinement, had first led the princely noble to take charge of his young cousin. Afterwards, when he beheld the boy grow in health and years, developing the while extraordinary quickness of intellect, and a sweet ingenuous disposition, he began to reflect on the station he held, his rights and his

injuries; and then the design was originated on which he was now called to act.

If Richard gained the day, all would stand as before. Should he be defeated—and that second sense, that feeling of coming events, which is one of the commonest, though the least acknowledged of the secret laws of our nature, whispered the yet unrevealed truth to him—who then would assume England's diadem, and how could he secure it for its rightful owner, the only surviving son of Edward the Fourth? All these reflections coursed themselves through his brain, while, with the zeal of a partizan, and the fervour of one wedded to the justice of his cause, he revolved every probable change of time and fortune.

At this moment a courier was announced: he brought tidings from the field. As is usual on the eve of a great event, they were dubious and contradictory. The armies faced each other, and the battle was impending. The doubts entertained on both sides, as to the part that Lord Stanley would take, gave still a greater uncertainty to the anticipations of each.

Soon after the arrival of this man, the loud ringing at the outer gate was renewed; and the trampling of horses, as they entered the court, announced a more numerous company. There was something in the movements of his domestics, that intimated to the Earl that his visitor was of superior rank. Could it be the King, who had fled; conquered, and a fugitive? Could such terms be applied to the high-hearted Richard? The doors of the hall were thrown open, and the question answered by the entrance of his visitant: it was a woman; and her name, "Lady Brampton!" in a tone of wonder, burst from the noble's lips.

"Even I, my good lord," said the lady; "allow me your private ear; I bring intelligence from Leicestershire. All is lost," she continued, when the closing of the door assured her of privacy; "all is lost, and all is gained—

Richard is slain. My emissaries brought swift intelligence of this event to me at Northampton, and I have hastened with it hither, that without loss of time you may act."

There was a quickness and a decision in the lady's manner that checked rather than encouraged her auditor. She continued: "Vesper hour has long passed—it matters not—London yet is ours. Command instantly that Richard the Fourth be proclaimed King of England."

Lord Lincoln started at these words. The death of his uncle and benefactor could not be received by him like the loss of a move at chess; a piece lost, that required the bringing up of other pieces to support a weak place. "The King is slain," were words that rung in his ears; drowning every other that the lady uttered with rapidity and agitation. "We will speak of that anon," he replied; and going to the high window of his hall, he threw it open, as if the air oppressed him. The wind sighed in melancholy murmurs among the branches of the elms and limes in the garden: the stars were bright, and the setting moon was leaving the earth to their dim illumination. "Yesternight," thought Lincoln, "he was among us, a part of our conversation, our acts, our lives; now his glazed eyes behold not these stars. The past is his; with the present and the future he has no participation."

Lady Brampton's impatience did not permit the Earl long to indulge in that commune with nature, which we eagerly seek when grief and death throws us back on the weakness of our human state, and we feel that we ourselves, our best laid projects and loftiest hopes, are but the playthings of destiny. "Wherefore," cried the lady, "does de la Poole linger? Does he hesitate to do his cousin justice? Does he desire to follow in the steps of his usurping predecessor? Wherefore this delay?"

"To strike the surer," replied Lincoln. "May not I ask wherefore this impatience?"

Even as he spoke, steps were heard near the apartment,

and while the eyes of both were turned with inquietude on the expected intruder, Lord Lovel entered: there was no triumph, no eager anticipation on his brow—he was languid from ill success and fatigue. Lincoln met him with the pleasure of one who sees his friend escaped from certain death. He was overjoyed to be assured of his existence; he was glad to have his assistance on the present emergency. "We know," he said, "all the evil tidings you bring us; we are now deliberating on the conduct we are to pursue: your presence will facilitate our measures. Tell me what other friends survive to aid us. The Duke of Norfolk, the Staffords, Sir Robert Brakenbury, where are they?"

Lovel had seen the Duke fall, the Staffords had accompanied his flight; uncertainty still hung over the fate of many others. This detail of the death of many of their common friends, subdued the impetuosity of the lady, till an account of how Richard himself had fought and been slain, recalled her to their former topic of discussion; and, again, she said, "It is strange that you do not perceive the dangers of delay. Why is not the King proclaimed?"

"Do you not know," asked Lord Lovel, "that the King is proclaimed?"

Lady Brampton clasped her hands, exclaiming—"Then Richard the Fourth will wear his father's crown!"

"Henry the Seventh," said Lovel, "possesses and wears the English crown. Lord Stanley placed the diadem on the head of the Earl of Richmond, and his soldiers, with one acclaim, acknowledged him as their sovereign."

"This is mere trifling," said the lady; "the base-born offspring of Lancaster may dare aspire so high, but one act of ours dethrones him. The Yorkists are numerous, and will defend their King: London is yet ours."

"Yes," replied Lincoln, "it is in our power to deluge the streets of London with blood; to bring massacre among its citizens, and worse disaster on its wives and maidens. I would not buy an eternal crown for myself—I will not

strive to place that of England on my kinsman's head—at this cost. We have had over-much of war: I have seen too many of the noble, young, and gallant fall by the sword. Brute force has had its day; now let us try what policy can do."

The council these friends held together was long and anxious. The lady still insisted on sudden and resolute measures. Lord Lovel, a soldier in all his nature, looked forward to the calling together the Yorkists from every part of the kingdom. The Earl, with a stateman's experience, saw more of obstacle to their purpose in the elevation of Henry, than either of his companions would allow; the extreme youth of the Duke of York, the oblivion into which he had sunk, and the stain on his birth, which was yet unremoved, would disincline the people to hazard life and fortune in his cause. It was necessary now to place him in safety, and far away from the suspicious eyes of his usurping enemy. That morning Lord Lincoln had brought him up from his rural retreat to the metropolis, and sheltered him for a few hours under safe but strange guardianship. He was left at the house of a Flemish money-lender well known at court. It was agreed that Lord Lovel should take him thence, and make him the companion of his journey to Colchester, where they should remain watching the turn of events, and secretly preparing the insurrection which would place him on the throne. Lady Brampton was obliged to proceed immediately northwards to join her husband; the north was entirely Yorkist, and her influence would materially assist the cause. The Earl remained in London; he would sound the inclinations of the nobility, and even coming in contact with the new King, watch over danger and power at its fountain-head. Time wore away during these deliberations; it was past midnight before the friends separated. Lord Lovel presented his young friend, Edmund Plantagenet, to the Earl, and recommended him to his protection. Refreshment was also necessary after

Lovel's fatiguing journey; but he was so intent on accomplishing his purpose, that he wasted but a few minutes in this manner, and then, being provided with a fresh horse from Lincoln's stables, he left the palace, to proceed first to the present abode of Richard of York, and afterwards, accompanied by him, on his road to Essex.

Lord Lovel threaded his way through the dark narrow streets of London towards Lothbury. The habitation of the money-lender was well-known to him, but it was not easily entered at past midnight. A promised bribe to the apprentice who hailed him from the lofty garret-window, and his signet-ring sent into his master, at length procured admission into the bed-chamber of Mynheer Jahn Warbeck. The old man sat up in his bed, his red cotton night-cap on his head, his spectacles, with which he had examined the ring, on his nose; his chamber was narrow and dilapidated, his bed of ill condition. "Who would suppose," thought Lovel, "that this man holds half England in pawn?"

When Warbeck heard that the errand of Lovel was to take from him his princely charge, he rose hastily, wrapping a robe round him, and opened a small wainscot door leading into a little low room, whence he drew the half-sleeping and wondering boy. There was a rush taper in the room, and daylight began to peep through the crevices of the shutters, giving melancholy distinctness to the dirty and dismantled chamber. One ray fell directly on the red night-cap and spectacles of old Jahn, whose parchment face was filled with wrinkles, yet they were lines of care, not of evil, and there was even benevolence in his close mouth; for the good humour and vivacity of the boy had won on him. Besides he had himself a son, for whom he destined all his wealth, of the same age as the little fellow whose plump roseate hand he held in his own brown shrivelled palm. The boy came in, rubbing his large blue eyes, the disordered ringlets of his fair hair shading a face

replete with vivacity and intelligence. Mynheer Jahn was somewhat loth to part with the little prince, but the latter clapped his hands in ecstasy when he heard that Lord Lovel had come to take him away.

"I pray you tell me, Sir Knight," said old Warbeck, "whether intelligence hath arrived of the victory of our gracious sovereign, and the defeat of the Welch rebels."

Richard became grave at these words; he fixed his eyes enquiringly on the noble: "Dear Lord Lovel," he cried, "for I remember you well, my very good lord, when you came to the Tower and found me and Robert Clifford playing at bowls—tell me, how you have fought, and whether you have won."

"Mine are evil tidings," said Lovel; "all is lost. We were vanquished, and your royal uncle slain."

Warbeck's countenance changed at these words; he lamented the King; he lamented the defeat of the party which he had aided by various advances of money, and his regrets at once expressed sorrow for the death of some, and dread from the confiscation of the property of others. Meanwhile, Richard of York was full of some thought that swelled his little breast; taking Lovel's hand, he asked again, "My uncle, Richard the Third, is dead?"

"Even so," was the reply; "he died nobly on the field of battle."

The child drew himself up, and his eyes flashed as he said proudly,—"Then I am King of England."

"Who taught your Grace that lesson?" asked Lovel.

"My liege—my brother Edward. Often and often in the long winter nights, and when he was sick in bed, he told me how, after he had been proclaimed King, he had been dethroned; but that when our uncle died he should be King again; and that if it pleased God to remove him, I should stand in his place; and I should restore my mother's honour, and this he made me swear."

"Bless the boy!" cried Warbeck, "he speaks most

"Mynheer Jahn was somewhat loth to part with the little prince."
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sagely; may the saints incline my lord, the Earl of Lincoln, to do his royal cousin justice!"

"Your Grace," said Lovel, "shall hear more of this as we proceed on our journey. Mynheer Jahn, the Earl bade me apply to you; you are to repair to him before noon; meanwhile, fill this long empty purse with gold coins. He will be my guarantee."

This was an inducement not to be resisted. Warbeck counted out the gold; the boy with light steps tripped down the creaking old staircase, and when Lovel had mounted, taking his hand, he sprung in the saddle before him. The fresh morning air was grateful to both, after the close chambers of the Fleming. The noble put his horse to a quick trot, and leaving London by a different road from that by which he had entered, took his way through Romford and Chelmsford to Colchester.

The news of the Earl of Richmond's victory and assumption of the crown reached London that night. The citizens heard it on their awakening, and Henry the Seventh was King.

—Mary Wollstoneraft Shelley, *Perkin Warbeck.*

XV

The Marriage of a Queen

HENRY THE SEVENTH was a man of strong sense and sound understanding. He was prudent, resolute, and valiant; on the other hand, he was totally devoid of generosity, and was actuated all his life by base and bad passions. At first the ruling feeling of his heart was hatred of the House of York—nor did he wholly give himself up to the avarice that blotted his latter years, till the extinction of that unhappy family satisfied his revenge, so that for want of fuel the flame died away. Most of his relatives and friends had perished in the field or on the scaffold by the hands of the Yorkists—his own existence had been in jeopardy during their exaltation; and the continuance of his reign, and even of his life, depended on their utter overthrow.

The competitors for the crown were the daughters of Edward the Fourth. Henry immediately saw the necessity of agreeing to the treaty entered into by the Countess of Richmond, for his marriage with the eldest of these princesses. He hated to owe his title to the crown to any part of the House of York; he resolved, if possible, to delay and break the marriage; but his own friends were urgent with him to comply, and prudence dictated the measure; he therefore promised to adopt it—thus effectually to silence the murmurs of the party of the White Rose.

Fortune smiled on the new sovereign. The disappear-

ance of the two children from the Tower caused the Yorkists to settle their affections on the young Elizabeth. She was at Sheriff-Hutton, waiting impatiently for her union with her uncle; now she received commands to proceed to London, as the affianced bride of that uncle's conqueror. Already the common talk ran on the entwining of the two Roses; and all the adherents of her family, who could gain access, recommended their cause to her, and entreated her, in the first days of power, not to forget her father's friends, but to incline the heart of her husband to an impartial love for the long rival houses of Lancaster and York.

Two parties arrived on the same day at Sheriff-Hutton, on the different missions of conducting the Lady Elizabeth and the Earl of Warwick to London. On the morning of their departure, they met in the garden of their abode to take leave of each other. Elizabeth was nineteen years old, Warwick was the exact age of her brother, Edward the Fifth; he was now sixteen.

"We are about to travel the same road with far different expectations," said Warwick. "I go to be a prisoner; you, fair cousin, to ascend a throne."

There was a despondency in the youth's manner that deeply affected this Princess. "Dear Edward," she replied, clasping his hand, "we have been fellow prisoners long, and sympathy has lightened the burthen of our chains. Can I forget our walks in this beauteous park, and the love and confidence we have felt for each other? My dearest boy, when I am Queen, Esther will claim a boon from Ahasuerus, and Warwick shall be the chief noble in my train."

She looked at him with a brilliant smile; her heart glowed with sisterly affection. She might well entertain high anticipations of future power; she was in the pride of youth and beauty; the light spirit of expected triumph lighted up her lovely face. She was about to become the bride of a conqueror, yet one whose laurels would droop without her propping; she was to be Queen of her native

land, the pearly clasp to unite the silken bond with which peace now bound long discordant England. She was unable to communicate this spirit of hope to her desponding friend; he gazed on her beauty with admiration and deep grief, asking, with tearful eyes, "Shall we ever meet again?"

"Yes! in London, in the Court of Henry, we shall again be companions—friends."

"I go to the Tower, not to the Court," replied Warwick, "and when those gloomy gates close on me, I shall pray that my head may soon repose on the cold stone that pillows my cousin Edward. I shall sleep uneasily till then."

"Fie, cousin!" said Elizabeth; "such thoughts ill beseem the nearest kinsman of the future Queen of England. You will remain but a short time in the Tower; but if you nurse thoughts like these, you will pine there as you did before I shared your prison here, and the roses with which my care has painted your cheeks, will again fade."

"Wan and colourless will my cheek be ere your bright eyes look on it again. Is it not sufficient grief that I part from you, beloved friend!"

A gush at once of sorrow, of affection, of long suppressed love, overpowered the youth. "I shall think of you," he added, "in my prison-house; and while I know that you regret my fate, I cannot be wholly a wretch. Do you not love me? And will you not, as a proof, give me one of these golden hairs, to soothe poor Warwick's misery? One only," he said, taking from her braided locks the small gift he demanded; "I will not diminish the rich beauty of your tresses, yet they will not look lovelier, pressed by the jewelled diadem of England, than under the green chaplet I crowned you with a few months past, my Queen of May!"

And thus, the eyes of each glistening with tears, they parted. For a moment Warwick looked as if he wished to press his cousin to his heart; and she, who loved him as a sister, would have yielded to his embrace: but before his

"Pressed her hands to his lips."

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arms enfolded her, he started back, bent one knee, pressed her hand to his lips, his eyes, his brow, and bending his head for an instant towards the ground, sprang up, and rushed down the avenue towards the gate at which his guard awaited him. Elizabeth stood motionless, watching him till out of sight. The sun sparkled brightly on a tuft of wild flowers at her feet. The glittering light caught her eye. "It is noon," she thought; "the morning dew is dry; it is Warwick's tears that gem these leaves." She gathered the flowers, and, first kissing them, placed them in her bosom; with slow steps, and a sorrowing heart, she re-entered the Castle.

The progress of the Lady Elizabeth from Sheriff-Hutton to London was attended by every circumstance that could sustain her hopes. She was received with acclamation and enthusiasm in every town through which she passed. She indeed looked forward with girlish vanity to the prospect of sharing the throne with Henry. She had long been taught the royal lesson, that with princes, the inclinations are not to bear any part in a disposal of the hand.

With a fluttering heart she entered London: small preparation had been made to receive her, and she was immediately conducted to her mother's abode at the Tower Royal, in the parish of Walbrook. It was now the eighteenth of October, and the preparations for the coronation of Henry were in great forwardness; Parliament had recognised his title without any allusion to the union with the heiress of the House of York.

The dissatisfaction manifested by the English people forced Henry to comply with the universal wish entertained of seeing the daughter of Edward the Fourth on the throne: yet it was not until the beginning of January that the Princess received intimation to prepare for her nuptials. This prospect, which had before elated, now visited her coldly; for, without the hope of influencing her husband, the state of a Queen appeared mere bondage. In her

heart she wished to reject her uncourteous bridegroom; and once she had ventured to express this desire to her mother, who, filled with affright, laid aside her intrigues, devoting herself to cultivate a more rational disposition in her daughter. Henry paid the doomed girl one visit, and saw little in her except a bashful child; while his keener observation was directed towards the dowager Queen. She, with smooth brow and winning smiles, did the honours of reception to her future son-in-law—to her bitter foe. The cold courtesy of Henry chilled her; and a strong desire lurked under her glossy mien, to reproach the usurper with his weak title, to set up her daughter's claim in opposition to his, and to defy him to the field. As soon as Henry departed, her suppressed emotions found vent in tears. Elizabeth was astonished; she knelt before her, caressed her, and asked if all were not well now, since the plighted troth had passed between her and the King.

"Has it passed?" murmured the Queen, "and is your hapless fate decided? Why did I not join you at Sheriff-Hutton? Why did I not place your hand in that of your noble cousin? Ah, Warwick! could I even now inspire you with my energy, you would be free, in arms: and England to a man would rise in the cause of Edward the Sixth, and my sweet Elizabeth!"

The colour in the Princess's cheeks varied during the utterance of this speech: first they flushed deep red, but the pale hue of resolution succeeded quickly to the agitation of doubt. "Mother," she said, "I was your child; plastic clay in your hands: had you said these words two hours ago, Warwick might have been liberated—I perhaps happy. But you have given me away; this ring is the symbol of my servitude; I belong to Henry. Say no word, I beseech you, that can interfere with my duty to him. Permit me to retire."

On the eighteenth of January her nuptials were celebrated.

The forbidding manners of Henry threw a chill over the marriage festival. He considered that he had been driven to this step by his enemies; and that the chief among these, influenced by her mother, was Elizabeth herself. The poor girl never raised her eyes from the moment she had encountered at the altar the stern and unkind glance of the King. Her steps were unassured, her voice faltering: the name of wife was to her synonymous with that of slave, while her sense of duty prevented every outward demonstration of the despair that occupied her heart.

Her mother's indignation was deeper, although not less veiled. She could silence, but not quell the rage that arose in her breast from her disappointment; and there were many present who shared her sentiments. As far as he had been able, Henry had visited the Yorkists with the heaviest penalties. An act of attainder had been passed against the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Lovel, the Staffords, and all indeed of note who had appeared against him. Those with whom he could not proceed to extremities, he wholly discountenanced. The Red Rose flourished bright and free—one single white blossom, doomed to untimely blight, being entwined with the gaudier flowers.

—Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Perkin Warbeck.*

XVI

The Rise of a New Queen

KING HENRY took a turn on the ramparts on the north side of Windsor castle, between the Curfew Tower and the Winchester Tower, and lingered for a short time on the bastion commanding that part of the acclivity where the approach, called the Hundred Steps, is now contrived. Here he cautioned the sentinels to be vigilant, and having gazed for a moment at the placid stream flowing at the foot of the castle, and tinged with the last rays of the setting sun, he proceeded to the royal lodgings, and entered the banquet-chamber, where supper was already served.

Wolsey sat on his right hand, but he did not vouchsafe him a single word, addressing the whole of his discourse to the Duke of Suffolk, who was placed on his left. As soon as the repast was over, he retired to his closet. But the cardinal would not be so repulsed, and sent one of his gentlemen to crave a moment's audience of the King, which, with some reluctance, was accorded.

"Well, cardinal," cried Henry, as Wolsey presented himself, and the usher withdrew. "You are playing a deep game with me, as you think; but take heed, for I see through it."

"I pray you dismiss these suspicions from your mind, my liege," said Wolsey. "No servant was ever more faithful to his master than I have been to you."

"No servant ever took better care of himself," cried the

King fiercely. "Not alone have you wronged me to enrich yourself, but you are ever intriguing with my enemies. I have nourished in my breast a viper; but I will cast you off—will crush you as I would the noxious reptile."

And he stamped upon the floor, as if he could have trampled the cardinal beneath his foot.

"Beseech you, calm yourself, my liege," replied Wolsey, in the soft and deprecatory tone which he had seldom known to fail with the King. "I have never thought of my own aggrandizement, but as it was likely to advance your power. For the countless benefits I have received at your hands, my soul overflows with gratitude. You have raised me from the meanest condition to the highest. You have made me your confidant, your adviser, your treasurer, and, with no improper boldness I say it, your friend. But I defy the enemies who have poisoned your ears against me, to prove that I have ever abused the trust placed in me. The sole fault that can be imputed to me is, that I have meddled more with temporal matters than with spiritual, and it is a crime for which I must answer before Heaven. But I have so acted because I felt that I might thereby best serve your highness. If I have aspired to the papal throne —which you well know I have—it has been that I might be yet a more powerful friend to your majesty, and render you, what you are entitled to be, the first prince in Christendom."

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed the King, who was, nevertheless, moved by the artful appeal.

"The gifts I have received from foreign princes," pursued Wolsey, seeing the effect he had produced, "the wealth I have amassed, have all been with a view of benefiting your majesty."

"Humph!" exclaimed the King.

"To prove that I speak the truth, sire," continued the wily cardinal, "the palace at Hampton Court, which I have just completed——"

"And at a cost more lavish than I myself should have expended on it," interrupted the King angrily.

"If I had destined it for myself, I should not have spent a tithe of what I have done," rejoined Wolsey. "Your highness's unjust accusations force me to declare my intentions somewhat prematurely. Deign," he cried, throwing himself at the King's feet, "deign to accept that palace and all within it. You were pleased, during your late residence there, to express your approval of it. And I trust it will find equal favour in your eyes, now that it is your own."

"By holy Mary, a royal gift!" cried Henry. "Rise, cardinal. You are not the grasping, selfish person you have been represented."

"Declare as much to my enemies, sire, and I shall be more than content," replied Wolsey. "You will find the palace better worth acceptance than at first sight might appear."

"How so?" cried the King.

"Your highness will be pleased to take this key," said the cardinal; "it is the key of the cellar."

"You have some choice wine there," cried Henry significantly; "given you by some religious house, or sent by some foreign potentate, ha!"

"It is a wine that a king might prize," replied the cardinal. "Your majesty will find a hundred hogsheads in that cellar, and each hogshead filled with gold."

"You amaze me!" cried the King, feigning astonishment. "And all this you freely give me?"

"Freely and fully, sire," replied Wolsey. "Nay, I have saved it for you. Men think I have cared for myself, whereas I have cared only for your majesty. Oh! my dear liege, by the devotion I have just approved to you, and which I would also approve, if needful, with my life, I beseech you to consider well before you arise Anne Boleyn to the throne. In giving you this counsel, I know I hazard the favour I have just regained. But even at that hazard, I

must offer it. Your infatuation blinds you to the terrible consequences of the step. The union is odious to all your subjects, but most of all to those not tainted with the new heresies and opinions. It will never be forgiven by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who will seek to avenge the indignity offered to his illustrious relative; while Francis will gladly make it a pretext for breaking his truce with you. Add to this the displeasure of the apostolic see, and it must be apparent that, powerful as you are, your position will be one of infinite peril."

"Thus far advanced, I cannot honourably abandon the divorce," said Henry.

"Nor do I advise its abandonment, sire," replied Wolsey; "but do not let it be a means of injuring you with all men. Do not let a mal-alliance place your very throne in jeopardy; as, with your own subjects and all foreign powers against you, must necessarily be the case."

"You speak warmly, cardinal," said Henry.

"My zeal prompts me to do so," replied Wolsey. "Anne Boleyn is in no respect worthy of the honour you propose her."

"And whom do you think more worthy?" demanded Henry.

"Those whom I have already recommended to your majesty, the Duchess d'Alençon, or the Princess Renée," replied Wolsey; "by a union with either of whom you would secure the cordial co-operation of Francis, and the interests of the see of Rome, which, in the event of war with Spain, you may need."

"No, Wolsey," replied Henry, taking a hasty turn across the chamber; "no considerations of interest or security shall induce me to give up Anne. I love her too well for that. Let the lion Charles roar, the fox Francis snarl, and the hydra-headed Clement launch forth his flames, I will remain firm to my purpose. I will not play the hypocrite with you, whatever I may do with others. I cast off

Catherine that I may wed Anne, because I cannot otherwise obtain her. And shall I now, when I have dared so much, and when the prize is in my grasp, abandon it?—Never! Threats, expostulations, entreaties are alike unavailing."

"I grieve to hear it, my liege," replied Wolsey, heaving a deep sigh. "It is an ill-omened union, and will bring woe to you, woe to your realm, and woe to the Catholic Church."

"And woe to you also, false cardinal!" cried Anne Boleyn, throwing aside the arras, and stepping forward. "I have overheard what has passed; and from my heart of hearts I thank you, Henry, for the love you have displayed for me. But I here solemnly vow never to give my hand to you till Wolsey is dismissed from your counsels."

"Anne!" exclaimed the King.

"My own enmity I could forego," pursued Anne vehemently, "but I cannot forgive him his duplicity and perfidy towards you. He has just proffered you his splendid palace of Hampton, and his treasures; and wherefore?—I will tell you: because he feared they would be wrested from him. His jester had acquainted him with the discovery just made of the secret hoard, and he was therefore compelled to have recourse to this desperate move. But I was appraised of his intentions by Will Sommers, and have come in time to foil him."

"By my faith, I believe you are right, sweetheart!" said the King.

"Go, tell your allies, Francis and Clement, that the King's love for me outweighs his fear of them," cried Anne, laughing spitefully. "As for you, I regard you as nothing. A few weeks ago I would have made terms with you. Now I am your mortal enemy, and will never rest till I have procured your downfall. Henry, you know the sole terms on which you can procure my hand."

The King nodded a playful affirmative.

"Then dismiss him at once—disgrace him," said Anne.

"Nay, nay," replied Henry, "the divorce is not yet passed. You are angered now, and will view matters more coolly to-morrow."

"I shall never change my resolution," she replied.

"If my dismissal and disgrace can save my sovereign, I pray him to sacrifice me without hesitation," said Wolsey; "but while I have liberty of speech with him, and aught of power remaining, I will use it to his advantage. I pray your majesty suffer me to retire."

And receiving a sign of acquiescence from the King, he withdrew.

Anne Boleyn remained with her royal lover for a few minutes to pour forth her gratitude for the attachment he had displayed to her, and to confirm the advantage she had gained over Wolsey. As soon as she was gone, Henry summoned an usher, and proceeded to the Curfew Tower.

The King left the archers at the Curfew Tower, and, wholly unattended, was passing at the back of St. George's Chapel, near the north transept, when he paused for a moment to look at the embattled entrance to the New Commons—a structure erected in the eleventh year of his own reign by James Denton, a canon, and afterwards Dean of Lichfield, for the accommodation of such chantry priests and choristers as had no place in the college. Over the doorway, surmounted by a niche, ran (and still runs) the inscription:

"ÆDES PRO SACELLANORUM CHORISTARUM CŌVIVIIS EXTRUCTA, A.D. 1519."

The building has since been converted into one of the canons' houses.

While he was contemplating this beautiful gateway, which was glimmering in the bright moonlight, a tall figure suddenly darted from behind one of the buttresses of the chapel, and seized his left arm with an iron grasp. The

suddenness of the attack took him by surprise; but he instantly recovered himself, plucked away his arm, and, drawing his sword, made a pass at his assailant, who, however, avoided the thrust, and darted with inconceivable swiftness through the archway leading to the cloisters. Though Henry followed as quickly as he could, he lost sight of the fugitive, but just as he was about to enter the passage running between the tome-house and the chapel, he perceived a person in the south ambulatory, evidently anxious to conceal himself, and, rushing up to him and dragging him to the light, he found it was no other than the cardinal's jester, Patch.

"What dost thou here, knave?" cried Henry angrily.

"I am waiting for my master, the cardinal," replied the jester, terrified out of his wits.

"Waiting for him here!" cried the King. "Where is he?"

"In that house," replied Patch, pointing to a beautiful bay window, full of stained glass, overhanging the exquisite arches of the north ambulatory.

"Why, that is Doctor Sampson's dwelling," cried Henry; "he who was chaplain to the Queen, and is a strong opponent of the divorce. What doth he there?"

"I am sure I know not," replied Patch, whose terror increased each moment. "Perhaps I have mistaken the house. Indeed, I am sure it must be Dr. Voysey's the next door."

"Thou liest, knave!" cried Henry fiercely; "thy manner convinces me there is some treasonable practice going forward. But I will soon find it out. Attempt to give the alarm, and I will cut thy throat."

With this he proceeded to the back of the north ambulatory, and, finding the door he sought unfastened, raised the latch and walked softly in. But before he got half-way down the passage Doctor Sampson himself issued from an inner room with a lamp in his hand. He started on seeing the King, and exhibited great alarm.

"The Cardinal of York is here—I know it," said Henry, in a deep whisper. "Lead me to him."

"Oh, go not forward, my gracious liege!" cried Sampson, placing himself in his path."

"Wherefore not?" rejoined the King. "Ha! what voice is that I hear in the upper chamber? Is she here, and with Wolsey? Out of my way, man," he added, pushing the canon aside, and rushing up the short wooden staircase.

When Wolsey returned from his interview with the King, which had been so unluckily interrupted by Anne Boleyn, he found his antechamber beset with a crowd of suitors, to whose solicitations he was compelled to listen, and having been detained in this manner for nearly half an hour, he at length retired into an inner room.

"Vile sycophants!" he muttered, "they bow the knee before me, and pay me greater homage than they render the King, but though they have fed upon my bounty and risen by my help, not one of them, if he was aware of my true position, but would desert me. Not one of them but would lend a helping hand to crush me. Not one but would rejoice in my downfall. But they have not deceived me. I knew them from the first—saw through their hollowness, and despised them. While power lasts to me, I will punish some of them. While power lasts!" he repeated. "Have I any power remaining? I have already given up Hampton and my treasures to the King; and the work of spoliation once commenced, the royal plunderer will not be content till he has robbed me of all; while his minion, Anne Boleyn, has vowed my destruction. Well, I will not yield tamely, nor fall unavenged."

As these thoughts passed through his mind, Patch, who had waited for a favourable moment to approach him, delivered him a small billet carefully sealed and fastened with a silken thread. Wolsey took it, and broke it open; and as his eye eagerly scanned its contents, the expression of his

countenance totally changed. A flash of joy and triumph irradiated his fallen features: and thrusting the note into the folds of his robe, he inquired of the jester by whom it had been brought, and how long.

"It was brought by messenger from Doctor Sampson," replied Patch, "and was committed to me with special injunctions to deliver it to your grace immediately on your return, and secretly."

The cardinal sat down, and for a few moments appeared lost in deep reflection; he then arose, and telling Patch he should return presently, quitted the chamber. But the jester, who was of an inquisitive turn, and did not like to be confined to half a secret, determined to follow him, and accordingly tracked him along the great corridor, down a winding staircase, through a private door near the Norman Gateway, across the middle ward, and finally saw him enter Doctor Sampson's dwelling at the back of the north ambulatory. He was reconnoitring the windows of the house from the opposite side of the cloisters in the hope of discovering something when he was caught, as before mentioned, by the King.

Wolsey, meanwhile, was received by Doctor Sampson at the doorway of his dwelling, and ushered by him into a small chamber on the upper floor, wainscoted with curiously carved and lustrously black oak. A silver lamp was burning on the table, and in the recess of the window, which was screened by thick curtains, sat a majestic lady, who rose on the cardinal's entrance. It was Catherine of Arragon.

"I attend your pleasure, madam," said Wolsey, with a profound inclination.

"You have been long in answering my summons," said the Queen; "but I could not expect greater promptitude. Time was when a summons from Catherine of Arragon would have been quickly and cheerfully attended to; when the proudest noble in the land would have borne her mes-

"'I attend your pleasure, Madam,' said Wolsey."

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sage to you, and when you would have passed through crowds to her audience-chamber. Now another holds her place, and she is obliged secretly to enter the castle where she once ruled, to despatch a valet to her enemy, to attend his pleasure, and to receive him in the dwelling of a humble canon. Times are changed with me, Wolsey —sadly changed."

"I have been in attendance on the King, madam, or I should have been with you sooner," replied Wolsey. "It grieves me sorely to see you here."

"I want not your pity," replied the Queen proudly. "I did not send for you to gratify your malice by exposing my abject state. I did not send for you to insult me by false sympathy; but in the hope that your own interest would induce you to redress the wrongs you have done me."

"Alas! madam, I fear it is now too late to repair the error I have committed," said Wolsey, in a tone of affected penitence and sorrow.

"You admit, then, that it was an error," cried Catherine. "Well, that is something. Oh! that you had paused before you began this evil work—before you had raised a storm which will destroy me and yourself. Your quarrel with my nephew, the Emperor Charles, has cost *me* dear, but it will cost *you* yet more dearly."

"I deserve all your reproaches, madam," said Wolsey, with feigned meekness; "and I will bear them without a murmur. But you have sent for me for some specific object, I presume?"

"I sent for you to give me aid, as much for your own sake as mine," replied the Queen, "for you are in equal danger. Prevent this divorce—foil Anne—and you retain the King's favour. Our interests are so far leagued together that you must serve me to serve yourself. My object is to gain time to enable my friends to act. Your colleague is secretly favourable to me. Pronounce no sentence here, but let the cause be removed to Rome. My

nephew, the emperor, will prevail upon the Pope to decide in my favour."

"I dare not thus brave the King's displeasure, madam," replied Wolsey.

"Dissembler!" exclaimed Catherine. "I now perceive the insincerity of your professions. Thus much I have said to try you. And now to my real motive for sending for you. I have in my possession certain letters that will ruin Anne Boleyn with the King."

"Ha!" exclaimed the cardinal joyfully; "if that be the case, all the rest will be easy. Let me see the letters, I pray you, madam."

Before Catherine could reply, the door was thrown violently open, and the King stood before them.

"Soh!" roared Henry, casting a terrible look at Wolsey, "I have caught you at your treasonable practices at last! And you, madam," he added, turning to Catherine, who meekly, but steadily, returned his gaze, "what brings you here again? Because I pardoned your indiscretion yesterday, think not I shall always be so lenient. You will leave the castle instantly. As to Wolsey, he shall render me a strict account of his conduct."

"I have nothing to declare, my liege," replied Wolsey, recovering himself. "I leave it to the Queen to explain why I came hither."

"The explanation shall be given at once," said Catherine. "I sent for the cardinal to request him to lay before your majesty these two letters from Anne Boleyn to Sir Thomas Wyat, that you might judge whether one who could write thus would make you a fitting consort. You disbelieved my charge of levity yesterday. Read these, sire, and judge whether I spoke the truth."

Henry glanced at the letters, and his brow grew dark.

"What say you to them, my liege?" cried Catherine, with a glance of triumph. "In the one she vows eternal constancy to Sir Thomas Wyat, and in the other—written

after her engagement to you—she tells him that though they can never meet as heretofore, she will always love him."

"Ten thousand furies!" cried the King. "Where got you these letters, madam?"

"They were given to me by a tall dark man as I quitted the castle last night," said the Queen. "He said they were taken from the person of Sir Thomas Wyat while he lay concealed in the forest."

"If I thought she wrote them," cried Henry, in an access of jealous fury, "I would cast her off for ever."

"Methinks your majesty should be able to judge whether they are true or false," said Catherine. "I know her writing well—too well, alas!—and am satisfied they are genuine."

"I am well assured that Wyat was concealed in the Lady Anne's chamber when your majesty demanded admittance and could not obtain it—when the Earl of Surrey sacrificed himself for her, and for his friend," said Wolsey.

"Perdition!" exclaimed the King, striking his brow with his clenched hand. "Oh, Catherine!" he continued, after a pause, during which she intently watched the workings of his countenance, "and it was for this lighthearted creature I was about to cast you off."

"I forgive you, sire—I forgive you!" exclaimed the Queen, clasping his hands, and bedewing them with grateful tears. "You have been deceived. Heaven keep you in the same mind!"

"You have preserved me," said Henry; "but you must not tarry here. Come with me to the royal lodgings."

"No, Henry," replied Catherine, with a shudder, "not while *she* is there."

"Make no conditions, madam," whispered Wolsey. "Go."

"She shall be removed to-morrow," said Henry.

"In that case I am content to smother my feelings," said the Queen.

"Come, then, Kate," said Henry, taking her hand. "Lord cardinal, you will attend us."

"Right gladly, my liege," replied Wolsey. "If this mood will only endure," he muttered, "all will go well. But his jealousy must not be allowed to cool. Would that Wyat were here!"

Doctor Sampson could scarcely credit his senses as he beheld the august pair come forth together, and a word from Wolsey explaining what had occurred threw him into transports of delight. But the surprise of the good canon was nothing to that exhibited as Henry and Catherine entered the royal lodgings, and the King ordered his own apartments to be instantly prepared for her majesty's reception.

Intelligence of the Queen's return was instantly conveyed to Anne Boleyn, and filled her with indescribable alarm. All her visions of power and splendour seemed to melt away at once. She sent for her father, Lord Rochford, who hurried to her in a state of the utmost anxiety, and closely questioned her whether the extraordinary change had not been occasioned by some imprudence of her own. But she positively denied the charge, alleging that she had parted with the King scarcely an hour before on terms of the most perfect amity, and with the full conviction that she had accomplished the cardinal's ruin.

"You should not have put forth your hand against him till you were sure of striking the blow," said Rochford. "There is no telling what secret influence he has over the King; and there may yet be a hard battle to fight. But not a moment must be lost in counteracting his operations. Luckily Suffolk is here, and his enmity to the cardinal will make him a sure friend to us. Pray Heaven you have not given the King fresh occasion for jealousy! That is all I fear."

And quitting his daughter, he sought out Suffolk, who, alarmed at what appeared like a restoration of Wolsey to

favour, promised heartily to co-operate with him in the struggle; and that no time might be lost, the duke proceeded at once to the royal closet, where he found the King pacing moodily to and fro.

"Your majesty seems disturbed," said the duke.

"Disturbed!—ay!" exclaimed the King. "I have enough to disturb me. I will never love again. I will forswear the whole sex. Harkee, Suffolk, you are my brother, my second self, and know all the secrets of my heart. After the passionate devotion I have displayed for Anne Boleyn—after all I have done for her—all I have risked for her—I have been deceived."

"Impossible, my liege!" exclaimed Suffolk.

"Why, so I thought," cried Henry, "and I turned a deaf ear to all insinuations thrown out against her till proof was afforded which I could no longer doubt."

"And what was the amount of the proof, my liege?" asked Suffolk.

"These letters," said Henry, handing them to him "found on the person of Sir Thomas Wyat."

"But these only prove, my liege, the existence of a former passion—nothing more," remarked Suffolk, after he had scanned them.

"But she vows eternal constancy to him!" cried Henry; "says she shall ever love him—says so at the time she professes devoted love for me! How can I trust her after that? Suffolk, I feel she does not love me exclusively; and my passion is so deep and devouring that it demands entire return. I must have her heart as well as her person; and I feel I have only won her in my quality of King."

"I am persuaded your majesty is mistaken," said the duke.

"Would I could think so!" sighed Henry. "But no—no, I cannot be deceived. I will conquer this fatal passion. Oh, Suffolk! it is frightful to be the bondslave of a woman—a fickle, inconstant woman. But between the depths of love and hate is but a step; and I can pass from one to the other."

"Do nothing rashly, my dear liege," said Suffolk; "nothing that may bring with it after-repentance. Do not be swayed by those who have inflamed your jealousy, and who could practise upon it. Think the matter calmly over, and then act. And till you have decided, see neither Catherine nor Anne; and, above all, do not admit Wolsey to your secret counsels"

"You are his enemy, Suffolk," said the King sternly.

"I am your majesty's friend," replied the duke. "I beseech you, yield to me on this occasion, and I am sure of your thanks hereafter."

"Well, I believe you are right, my good friend and brother," said Henry, "and I will curb my impulses of rage and jealousy. To-morrow, before I see either the Queen or Anne, we will ride forth into the forest, and talk the matter further over."

"Your highness has come to a wise determination," said the duke.

"Oh, Suffolk!" sighed Henry, "would I had never seen this siren! She exercises a fearful control over me, and enslaves my very soul."

"I cannot say whether it is for good or ill that you have met, my dear liege," replied Suffolk, "but I fancy I can discern the way in which your ultimate decision will be taken. But it is now near midnight. I wish your majesty sound and untroubled repose."

On the following day a reconciliation took place between the King and Anne Boleyn. During a ride in the Great Park with his royal brother, Suffolk not only convinced him of the groundlessness of his jealousy, but contrived to incense him strongly against Wolsey. Thus the Queen and the cardinal lost the momentary advantage they had gained, while Anne's power was raised yet higher. Yielding to her entreaties not to see Catherine again, nor to hold further conference with Wolsey until the sentence of the court should be pronounced, Henry left the castle that very day,

and proceeded to his palace of Bridewell. The distress of the unhappy Queen at this sudden revolution of affairs may be conceived. Distrusting Wolsey, and putting her sole reliance on Heaven and the goodness of her cause, she withdrew to Blackfriars, where she remained till the court met. As to the cardinal himself, driven desperate by his situation, and exasperated by the treatment he had experienced, he resolved, at whatever risk, to thwart Henry's schemes, and revenge himself upon Anne Boleyn.

Thus matters continued till the court met as before in the Parliament chamber, at Blackfriars. On this occasion Henry was present, and took his place under a cloth of estate—the Queen sitting at some distance below him. Opposite them were the legates, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the whole of the bishops. The aspect of the assemblage was grave and anxious. Many eyes were turned on Henry, who looked gloomy and menacing, but the chief object of interest was the Queen, who, though pale as death, had never in her highest days of power worn a more majestic and dignified air than on this occasion.

The proceedings of the court then commenced, and the King being called by the crier, he immediately answered to the summons. Catherine was next called, and, instead of replying, she marched towards the canopy beneath which the King was seated, prostrated herself, and poured forth a most pathetic and eloquent appeal to him, at the close of which she arose, and, making a profound reverence, walked out of the court, leaning upon the arm of her general receiver, Griffith. Henry desired the crier to call her back, but she would not return; and seeing the effect produced by her address upon the auditory, he endeavoured to efface it by an eulogium on her character and virtues, accompanied by an expression of deep regret at the step he was compelled to take in separating himself from her. But his hypocrisy availed him little, and his speech was received with looks of ill-disguised incredulity. Some further

discourse then took place between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Rochester; but as the Queen had absented herself, the court was adjourned to the next day, when it again met, and as she did not then appear, though summoned, she was pronounced contumacious. After repeated adjournments, the last session was held, and judgment demanded on the part of the King, when Campeggio, as had been arranged between him and Wolsey, declined to pronounce it until he had referred the matter to the Pope, and the court was dissolved.

About two months after this event, during which time the legate's commission had been revoked, while Henry was revolving the expediency of accomplishing the divorce through the medium of his own ecclesiastical courts, and without reference to that of Rome, a despatch was received from the Pope by the two cardinals, requiring them to cite the King to appear before him by attorney on a certain day. At the time of the arrival of this instrument, Campeggio chanced to be staying with Wolsey at his palace at Esher, and as the King was then holding his court at Windsor, they both set out for the castle on the following day, attended by a retinue of nearly a hundred horsemen, splendidly equipped.

It was now the middle of September, and the woods, instead of presenting one uniform mass of green, glowed with an infinite variety of lovely tints. And yet, despite the beauty of the scene, there was something melancholy in witnessing the decline of the year, as marked by those old woods, and by the paths that led through them, so thickly strewn with leaves. Wolsey was greatly affected. "These noble trees will ere long be reft of their glories," he thought, "and so, most likely, will it be with me, and perhaps my winter may come on sooner than theirs!"

The cardinal and his train had crossed Staines Bridge, and passing through Egham, had entered the Great Park near Englefield Green. They were proceeding along the

high ridge overlooking the woody region between it and the castle, when a joyous shout in the glades beneath reached them, and, looking down, they saw the King, accompanied by Anne Boleyn, and attended by his falconers and a large company of horsemen, pursuing the sport of hawking. The royal party appeared so much interested in their sport that they did not notice the cardinal and his train, and were soon out of sight. But as Wolsey descended Snow Hill, and entered the long avenue, he heard the trampling of horses at a little distance, and, shortly afterwards, Henry and Anne issued from out the trees. They were somewhat more than a bow-shot in advance of the cardinal; but instead of halting till he came up, the King had no sooner ascertained who it was, than, despatching a messenger to the castle, who was seen galloping swiftly down the avenue, he rode off with Anne Boleyn towards the opposite side of the park. Though deeply mortified by the slight, Wolsey concealed his vexation from his brother cardinal, and pursued his way to the castle, before which he presently arrived. The gate was thrown open at his approach, but he had scarcely entered the lower wards when Sir Henry Norris, the King's groom of the stole, advanced to meet him, and, with a sorrowful expression of countenance, said that his royal master had so many guests at the castle that he could not accommodate him and his train.

"I understand your drift, sir," replied Wolsey; "you would tell me I am not welcome. Well, then, his eminence Cardinal Campeggio and myself must take up our lodgings at some hostel in the town, for it is necessary we should see the King."

"If your grace is content to dismiss your attendants," said Norris, in a low tone, "you and Cardinal Campeggio can be lodged in Henry the Third's Tower. Thus much I will take upon me; but I dare not admit you to the royal lodgings."

Wolsey tried to look unconcerned, and calling to his gentleman usher, George Cavendish, gave him some instructions in a low voice, upon which the other immediately placed himself at the head of the retinue, and ordered them to quit the castle with him, leaving only the jester, Patch, to attend upon his master. Campeggio's attendants being, comparatively speaking, few in number, were allowed to remain, and his litter was conveyed to Henry the Third's Tower—a fortification standing in the south side of the lower ward, near the edge of the dry moat surrounding the Round Tower. At the steps of this tower Wolsey dismounted, and was about to follow Campeggio into the doorway, when Will Sommers, who had heard of his arrival, stepped forward, and, with a salutation of mock formality, said, "I am sure it will grieve the King, my master, not to be able to accommodate your grace's train; but since it is larger than his own, you will scarce blame his want of hospitality."

"Nor the courtesy of his attendants," rejoined Wolsey sharply. "I am in no mood for thy jesting now. Stand aside, sirrah, or I will have the rod applied to thy back."

"Take care the King does not apply the rod to your own, lord cardinal," retorted Will Sommers. "If he scourges you according to your deserts, your skin will be redder than your robe." And his mocking laugh pursued Wolsey like the hiss of a snake into the tower.

Some two hours after this Henry and his attendants returned from the chase. The King seemed in a blithe humour, and Wolsey saw him laugh heartily as Will Sommers pointed with his bauble towards Henry the Third's Tower. The cardinal received no invitation to the royal banquet; and the answer to his solicitation for an interview was that he and Campeggio would be received in the presence-chamber on the following morning, but not before.

That night a great revel was held in the castle. Mas-

quing, dancing, and feasting filled up the evening, and the joyous sounds and strains reached Wolsey in his seclusion, and forced him to contrast it with his recent position, when he would have been second only to the King in the entertainment.

The morning promised to be fine, but it was then hazy. and the greater part of the forest was wrapped in mist, The castle, however, was seen to great advantage. Above Wolsey rose the vast fabric of the Round Tower, on the summit of which the broad standard was at that moment being unfurled; while the different battlements and towers arose majestically around. But Wolsey's gaze rested chiefly upon the exquisite mausoleum lying immediately beneath him, in which he had partly prepared for himself a magnificent monument. A sharp pang shook him as he contemplated it, and he cried aloud, "My very tomb will be wrested from me by this rapacious monarch; and after all my care and all my cost I know not where I shall rest my bones!"

Saddened by the reflection he descended to his chamber, and again threw himself on the couch.

But Wolsey was not the only person in the castle who had passed a sleepless night. Of the host of his enemies many had been kept awake by the anticipation of his downfall on the morrow; and among these was Anne Boleyn, who had received an assurance from the King that her enmity should at length be fully gratified.

At the appointed hour the two cardinals proceeded to the royal lodgings. They were detained for some time in the ante-chamber, where Wolsey was exposed to the taunts and sneers of the courtiers who had lately so servilely fawned upon him. At length they were ushered into the presence-chamber, at the upper end of which, beneath a canopy emblazoned with the royal arms woven in gold, sat Henry, with Anne Boleyn on his right hand. At the foot of the throne stood Will Sommers, and near him the Dukes

of Richmond and Suffolk. Norfolk, Rochford, and a number of other nobles, all open enemies of Wolsey, were likewise present. Henry watched the advance of the cardinals with a stern look, and, after they had made an obeisance to him, he motioned them to rise.

"You have sought an interview with me, my lords," he said, with suppressed rage. "What would you?"

"We have brought an instrument to you, my liege," said Wolsey, "which has just been received from his holiness the Pope."

"Declare its nature," said Henry.

"It is a citation," replied Wolsey, "enjoining your highness to appear by attorney in the papal court under a penalty of ten thousand ducats."

And he presented a parchment, stamped with the great seal of Rome, to the King, who glanced his eye fiercely over it, and then dashed it to the ground with an explosion of fury terrible to hear and to witness.

"Ha! by Saint George!" he cried; "am I as nothing that the Pope dares to insult me thus?"

"It is a mere judicial form, your majesty," interposed Campeggio; "and is chiefly sent by his holiness to let you know we have no further jurisdiction in the matter of the divorce."

"I will take care you have not, nor his holiness either," roared the King. "By my father's head, he shall find I will be no longer trifled with."

"But, my liege——" cried Campeggio.

"Peace," cried the King. "I will hear no apologies nor excuses. The insult has been offered, and cannot be effaced. As for you, Wolsey——"

"Sire," exclaimed the cardinal, shrinking before the whirlwind of passion, which seemed to menace his utter extermination.

"As for you, I say," pursued Henry, extending his hand towards him, while his eyes flashed fire, "who by your

outrageous pride have so long overshadowed our honour—who, by your insatiate avarice and appetite for wealth have oppressed our subjects—who by your manifold acts of bribery and extortion have impoverished our realm, and by your cruelty and partiality have subverted the due course of justice, and turned it to your own ends—the time is come when you shall receive the punishment for your offences."

"You wrong me, my dear liege," cried Wolsey abjectly. "These are the accusations of my enemies. Grant me a patient hearing and I will explain all."

"I would not sharpen the King's resentment against you, lord cardinal," said Anne Boleyn, "for it is keen enough; but I cannot permit you to say that these charges are merely hostile. Those who would support the King's honour and dignity must desire to see you removed from his counsels."

"Peace!" thundered the King. "Your accusers are not one but many, Wolsey; nay, the whole of my people cry out for justice against you. And they shall have it. But you shall hear the charges they bring. Firstly, contrary to our prerogative, and for your own advancement and profit, you have obtained authority legatine from the Pope, by which authority you have not only spoiled and taken away their substance from many religious houses, but have usurped much of our own jurisdiction. You have also made a treaty with the King of France for the Pope without our consent, and concluded another friendly treaty with the Duke of Ferrara, under our great seal, and in our name, without our warrant. And, furthermore, you have presumed to couple yourself with our royal self in your letters and instructions as if you were on equality with us."

"Ha! ha! 'The King and I would have you do thus!' 'The King and I give you our hearty thanks!' Ran it not so, cardinal?" cried Will Sommers. "You will soon win the cap and bells."

"In exercise of your legatine authority," pursued the King, "you have given away benefices contrary to our crown and dignity, for the which you are in danger of forfeiture of your lands and goods.

"Then it has been your practice to receive all the ambassadors to our court first at your own palace to hear their charges and intentions, and to instruct them as you might see fit. By your ambition and pride you have undone many of our poor subjects, have suppressed religious houses, and received their possessions; have seized upon the goods of wealthy spiritual men deceased; constrained all ordinaries yearly to compound with you; have gotten riches for yourself and servants by subversion of the laws, and by abuse of your authority in causing divers pardons of the Pope to be suspended until you, by promise of a yearly pension, chose to revive them; and also by crafty and untrue tales have sought to create dissension among our nobles."

"That we can all avouch for," cried Suffolk. "It was never merry in England while there were cardinals among us."

"Of all men in England your grace should be the last to say so," rejoined Wolsey, "for if I had not been cardinal you would not have had a head upon your shoulders to utter the taunt."

"No more of this!" cried the King. "You have misdemeaned yourself in our court by keeping up as great state in our absence as if we had been there in person, and presumptuously have dared to join and imprint your badge, the cardinal's hat, under our arms, graven on our coins struck at York. And lastly, whenever in open Parliament allusion hath been made to heresies and erroneous sects, you have failed to correct and notice them to the danger of the whole body of good and Christian people of this our realm."

"This last charge ought to win me favour in the eyes of

one who professes the opinions of Luther," said Wolsey to Anne. "But I deny it, as I do all the rest."

"I will listen to no defence, Wolsey," replied the King. "I will make you a terrible example to others how they offend us and our laws hereafter."

"Do not condemn me unheard!" cried the cardinal, prostrating himself.

"I have heard too much, and I will hear no more!" cried the King fiercely. "I dismiss you from my presence for ever. If you are innocent, as you aver, justice will be done you. If you are guilty, as I believe you to be, look not for leniency from me, for I will show you none." And, seating himself, he turned to Anne, and said in a low tone, "Are you content, sweetheart?"

"I am," she replied. "I shall not now break my vow."

And, accompanied by Campeggio, Wolsey slowly quitted the presence-chamber.

—W. H. Ainsworth, *Windsor Castle.*

XVII

When England and Spain were Friends

ON the 2nd of January, 1554, a solemn embassy from the Emperor Charles the Fifth, consisting of four of his most distinguished nobles, the Count d'Egmont, the Count Lalaing, the Seigneur de Courrieres, and the Sieur de Nigry, chancellor of the order of the Toison d'Or, arrived in London to sign the marriage-treaty between Philip Prince of Spain and Queen Mary, which had been previously agreed upon by the courts of England and Spain.

Gardiner, who as long as he found it possible to do so, had strenuously opposed the match, and had recommended Mary to unite herself to Courtenay, or at least to some English nobleman, finding her resolutely bent upon it, consented to negotiate the terms of marriage with Renard, the Spanish Ambassador, and took especial care that they were favourable to his royal mistress.

While this was going forward De Noailles and his party had not been idle. Many schemes were devised, but some were abandoned from the irresolution and vacillation of Courtenay; others were discovered and thwarted by Renard. Still the chief conspirators, though suspected, escaped detection, or rather their designs could not be brought home to them, and they continued to form their plans as the danger grew more imminent with greater zeal than ever.

At one time it was determined to murder Arundel, Paget, Rochester, and the chief supporters of the Spanish match,

to seize the person of the Queen and compel her to marry Courtenay, or depose her and place Elizabeth on the throne. This plan not suiting the views of Lord Guilford Dudley and Suffolk, was opposed by them ; and owing to the conflicting interests of the different parties that unity of purpose, indispensable to success, could not be obtained.

Matters were in this state at the commencement of the new year, when the ambassadors arrived from the court of Spain. Shortly after their arrival they had an audience of the Queen in the council chamber of the White Tower, and when they had declared in due form that the Prince of Spain demanded her in marriage, she replied with great dignity, but some little prudery :—

"It does not became one of my sex to speak of her marriage, nor to treat of it herself. I have therefore charged my council to confer with you on the matter, and, by the strictest conditions, to assure all rights and advantages to my kingdom, which I shall ever regard as my first husband."

As she pronounced the last words she glanced at the ring placed on her finger by Gardiner on the day of her coronation.

On the following day the four ambassadors held a conference with Gardiner, Arundel, and Paget. The terms were entirely settled, and on the 12th of January the treaty was signed and delivered on both sides.

Three days after the marriage-treaty was signed, namely, on the 15th of January, 1554, the lords of the council, the lord mayor, the aldermen, and forty of the head commoners of the city, were summoned to the Tower, where they were received in the presence-chamber of the palace by Gardiner and Renard, the former of whom, in his capacity of chancellor, made them a long oration, informing them that an alliance was definitely concluded between the Queen and Philip of Spain ; and adding, "that they were bound to thank God that so noble, worthy, and famous a prince

would so humble himself in his union with her highness as to take upon him rather the character of a subject than of a monarch of equal power."

The terms of the treaty were next read, and the chancellor expatiated upon the many important concessions made by the imperial ambassadors, endeavouring to demonstrate that England was by far the greatest gainer by the alliance, and stating "that it was her highness's pleasure and request, that like good subjects they would, for her sake, most lovingly receive her illustrious consort with reverence, joy, and honour."

No plaudits followed this announcement, nor was the slightest expression of joy manifested except by the lords Arundel, Paget, and Rochester,—the main supporters of the match, when it was brought before Parliament. Gardiner glanced at the council—at the civic authorities—as if in expectation of a reply, but none was attempted unless their very silence could be so construed. Whatever his real sentiments might be, the chancellor assumed an air of deep displeasure, and turning to Renard, who, with arms folded on his breast, scanned the assemblage with a cold scrutinizing gaze, asked in an undertone whether he should dismiss them?

"On no account," replied the ambassador. "Compel them to give utterance to their thoughts. We shall the better know how to deal with them. My project once carried, and Philip united to Mary," he muttered to himself, "we will speedily cudgel these stubborn English bulldogs into obedience."

"Renard does not appear to relish the reception which the announcement of her majesty's proposed alliance has met with," observed De Noailles, who stood in one corner of the chamber with Courtenay. "I will give him a foretaste of what is to follow. Had your lordship been proposed to the assembly their manner would have been widely different."

"Perhaps so," returned Courtenay, with a gratified smile; "and yet I know not."

"It may be shortly put to the proof," answered De Noailles.

"Never," replied Courtenay; "I will never wed Mary."

"But Elizabeth?" cried the ambassador.

"Ay, Elizabeth," echoed the earl passionately, "with, or without a throne, she would be equally dear to me."

"You shall have her and the crown as well," replied De Noailles.

"I care not for the latter, provided I can obtain the former," returned the earl.

"One is dependent upon the other," rejoined De Noailles. "While Mary reigns you must give up all hopes of Elizabeth."

"It is that conviction alone that induces me to take part in the conspiracy," sighed Courtenay. "I am neither ambitious to rule this kingdom nor to supplant Philip of Spain. But I would risk fortune, title, life itself, for Elizabeth."

"I know it," ejaculated De Noailles to himself, "and therefore I hold her out as a lure to you, weak, wavering fool! I will use you as far as I find necessary, but no farther. Rash and hare-brained as he is, Lord Guilford Dudley would make the better leader, and is the more likely to succeed. Jane's party is hourly gaining strength. Well, well, I care not who wins the day, provided I foil Renard, and that I will do at any cost."

"A thousand marks that I read your excellency's thoughts!" cried a martial-looking personage approaching them. He was attired in a coat of mail, with quilted sleeves, a velvet cassock, cuisses, and buff boots drawn up above the knee, and carried in his hand a black velvet cap, ornamented with broad bone-work lace. His arms were rapier and dagger, both of the largest size. "Is the wager accepted?" he added, taking the ambassador's arm within his own and drawing him aside.

"My thoughts are easily guessed, Sir Thomas Wyat,"

replied De Noailles, "I am thinking how prosperously all goes for us."

"Right," rejoined Wyat; "out of that large assemblage three only are favourable to the imperialists. If you approve it, I will myself—though not a member of the council—answer Gardiner's speech, and tell him we will not suffer this hateful alliance to take place."

"That were unwise," rejoined De Noailles; "do not meddle in the matter. It will only attract suspicion towards us."

"I care not if it does," replied Wyat; "we are all ready and sure of support. I will go further if need be, and add, if the Queen weds not Courtenay, a general insurrection will follow."

"Courtenay will never wed the Queen," observed the earl, who had followed them, and overheard the remark.

"How?" exclaimed Wyat, in surprise.

"No more at present," interposed De Noailles hastily. "Renard's eyes are upon us."

"What if they are?" cried Wyat, glancing fiercely in the direction of the imperial ambassador. "His looks—basilisk though they be—have no power to strike us dead. Oh, that I had an opportunity of measuring swords with him! He should soon perceive the love I bear his prince and him."

"I share in your hatred towards him," observed Courtenay. "The favour Mary shows him proves the ascendency he has obtained over her."

"If he retains his power, farewell to the liberty of Englishmen," rejoined Wyat; "we shall become as abject as the Flemings. But I, for one, will never submit to the yoke of Spain."

"Not so loud!" cried De Noailles, checking him. "You will effectually destroy our scheme. Renard only seeks some plea to attack us. Have a moment's patience, and some one not connected with the plot will take the responsibility upon himself."

The prudence of the ambassador's counsel was speedily exemplified. While the conversation above related occurred, a few words passed between the principal members of the council, and the heads of the civic authorities, and, at their instance, the Earl of Pembroke stepped forward.

"We are aware, my lord," he said, addressing Gardiner, "that we ought, on the present occasion, to signify our approval of the Queen's choice—to offer her our heartfelt congratulations—our prayers for her happiness. But we shall not seek to disguise our sentiments. We do *not* approve this match; and we have heard your lordship's communication with pain—with sorrow—with displeasure—displeasure, that designing counsellors should have prevailed upon her highness to take a step fatal to her own happiness, and to the welfare of her kingdom. Our solicitations are, therefore—and we earnestly entreat your lordship to represent them to her majesty, that she will break off this engagement, and espouse some English nobleman. And we further implore of her to dismiss from her councils the imperial ambassador, M. Simon Renard, by whose instrumentality this match has been contrived, and whose influence we conceive to be prejudicial to the interests of our country."

"You do me wrong, Lord Pembroke," replied Renard; "and I appeal to the lord chancellor, whether, in negotiating this treaty, I have made any demands on the part of my sovereign calculated to detract from the power or authority of yours."

"On the contrary," replied Gardiner, "your excellency has conceded more than we had any right to expect."

"And more than my brother-ambassadors deemed fitting," rejoined Renard. "But I do not repent what I have done, —well knowing how anxious the Emperor Charles the Fifth is to unite his son to so wise, so excellent, and so religious a princess as the Queen of this realm, and that no sacrifice could be too great to insure him her hand."

"I am bound to add that your excellency has advanced

nothing but the truth," acquiesced Gardiner; "and though, at first, as is well known to Lord Pembroke and others of the council, I was as averse to the match as he or they could be, I am now its warmest advocate. But I will not prolong the discussion. Her highness's word is passed to the prince—the contract signed—the treaty concluded. Your remonstrances, therefore, are too late. And if you will suffer me to point out to you the only course that can with propriety be pursued, I would urge you to offer her majesty your loyal congratulations on her choice—to prepare to receive her consort in the manner she has directed—and to watch over the interests of your country so carefully, that the evils you dread may never arise."

"If my solemn assurance will satisfy the Earl of Pembroke and the other honourable persons here present," remarked Renard, "I will declare, in the prince my master's name, that he has not the remotest intention of interfering with the government of this country—of engaging it in any war—or of placing his followers in any office or post of authority."

"Whatever may be the prince's intentions," rejoined Gardiner, "he is precluded by the treaty from acting upon them. At the same time, it is but right to add, that these terms were not wrung from his ambassador, but voluntarily proposed by him."

"They will never be adhered to," cried Sir Thomas Wyat, stepping forward, and facing Renard, whom he regarded with a look of defiance.

"Do you dare to question my word, sir?" exclaimed Renard.

"I do," replied Wyat sternly. "And let no Englishman put faith in one of your nation, or he will repent his folly. I am a loyal subject of the Queen, and would shed my heart's blood in her defence. But I am also a lover of my country, and will never surrender her to the domination of Spain!"

"Sir Thomas Wyat," rejoined Gardiner, "you are well known as one of the Queen's bravest soldiers; and it is well you are so, or your temerity would place you in peril."

"I care not what the consequences are to myself, my lord," replied Wyat, "if the Queen will listen to my warning. It is useless to proceed further with this match. The nation will never suffer it to take place; nor will the prince be allowed to set foot upon our shores."

"These are bold words, Sir Thomas," observed Gardiner suspiciously. "Whence do you draw your conclusions?"

"From sure premises, my lord," answered Wyat. "The very loyalty entertained by her subjects towards the Queen makes them resolute not to permit her to sacrifice herself. They have not forgotten the harsh treatment experienced by Philip's first wife, Maria of Portugal. Hear me, my lord chancellor, and report what I say to her highness. If this match is persisted in, a general insurrection will follow."

"This is a mere pretext for some rebellious design, Sir Thomas," replied Gardiner sternly. "Sedition ever masks itself under the garb of loyalty. Take heed, sir. Your actions shall be strictly watched, and if aught occurs to confirm my suspicions, I shall deem it my duty to recommend her majesty to place you in arrest."

"Wyat's rashness will destroy us," whispered De Noailles to Courtenay.

"Before we separate, my lords," observed Renard, "I think it right to make known to you that the Emperor, deeming it inconsistent with the dignity of so mighty a Queen as your sovereign to wed beneath her own rank, is about to resign the crown of Naples and the dukedom of Milan to his son, prior to the auspicious event."

A slight murmur of applause arose from the council at this announcement.

"You hear that," cried the Earl of Arundel. "Can you longer hesitate to congratulate the Queen on her union?"

The earl was warmly seconded by Paget and Rochester, but no other voice joined them.

"The sense of the assembly is against it," observed the Earl of Pembroke.

"I am amazed at your conduct, my lords," cried Gardiner angrily. "You deny your sovereign the right freely accorded to the meanest of her subjects—the right to choose for herself a husband. For shame! for shame! Your sense of justice, if not your loyalty, should prompt you to act differently. The Prince of Spain has been termed a stranger to this country, whereas his august sire is not merely the Queen's cousin, but the oldest ally of the crown. So far from the alliance being disadvantageous, it is highly profitable, ensuring, as it does, the Emperor's aid against our constant enemies, the Scots and the French. Of the truth of this you may judge by the opposition it has met with, overt and secret, from the ambassador of the King of France. But without enlarging upon the advantages of the union, which must be sufficiently apparent to you all, I shall content myself with stating that it is not your province to dictate to the Queen whom she shall marry, or whom she shall not marry, but humbly to acquiesce in her choice. Her majesty, in her exceeding goodness, has thought fit to lay before you—a step altogether needless—the conditions of her union. It pains me to say you have received her condescension in a most unbecoming manner. I trust, however, a better feeling has arisen among you, and that you will now enable me to report you, as I desire, to her highness."

The only assenting voices were those of the three lords constituting the imperial party in the council.

Having waited for a short time, Gardiner bowed gravely, and dismissed the assemblage.

As he was about to quit the presence-chamber, he perceived Courtenay standing in a pensive attitude in the embrasure of a window. Apparently, the room was entirely

deserted, except by the two ushers, who, with white wands in their hands, were stationed on either side of the door. It suddenly occurred to Gardiner that this would be a favourable opportunity to question the earl respecting the schemes in which he more than suspected he was a party, and he accordingly advanced towards him.

"You have heard the reception which the announcement of her majesty's marriage has met with," he said. "I will frankly own to you it would have been far more agreeable to me to have named your lordship to them. And you have to thank yourself that such has not been the case."

"True," replied Courtenay, raising his eyes and fixing them upon the speaker. "But I have found love more powerful than ambition."

"And do you yet love Elizabeth?" demanded Gardiner, with a slight sneer. "Is it possible that an attachment can endure with your lordship longer than a month?"

"I never loved till I loved her," sighed Courtenay.

"Be that as it may, you must abandon her," returned the chancellor. "The Queen will not consent to your union."

"Your lordship has just observed, in your address to the council," rejoined Courtenay, "that it is the privilege of all —even of the meanest—to choose in marriage whom they will. Since her highness would exert this right in her own favour, why deny it to her sister?"

"Because her sister has robbed her of her lover," replied Gardiner. "Strong-minded as she is, Mary is not without some of the weaknesses of her sex. She could not bear to witness the happiness of a rival."

Courtenay smiled.

"I understand your meaning, my lord," pursued Gardiner sternly; "but if you disobey the Queen's injunctions in this particular, you will lose your head, and so will the princess."

"The Queen's own situation is fraught with more peril than mine," replied Courtenay. "If she persists in her

match with the Prince of Spain, she will lose her crown, and then who shall prevent my wedding Elizabeth?"

Gardiner looked at him, as he said this, so fixedly, that the earl involuntarily cast down his eyes.

"Your words and manner, my lord," observed the chancellor, after a pause, "convince me that you are implicated in a conspiracy, known to be forming against the Queen."

"My lord!" cried Courtenay.

"Do not interrupt me," continued Gardiner,—"the conduct of the council to-day, the menaces of Sir Thomas Wyat, your own words, convince me that decided measures must be taken. I shall therefore place you in arrest. And this time, rest assured, care shall be taken that you do not escape."

Courtenay laid his hand upon his sword, and looked uneasily at the door.

"Resistance will be in vain, my lord," pursued Gardiner; "I have but to raise my voice, and the guard will immediately appear."

"You do not mean to execute your threats, my lord?" rejoined Courtenay.

"I have no alternative," returned Gardiner, "unless by revealing to me all you know respecting this conspiracy you will enable me to crush it. Not to keep you longer in the dark, I will tell you that proofs are already before us of your connection with the plot. The dwarf Xit, employed by M. de Noailles to convey messages to you, and who assisted in your escape, has, under threat of torture, made a full confession. From him we have learnt that a guitar, containing a key to the cipher to be used in a secret correspondence, was sent to Elizabeth by the ambassador. The instrument has been found in the princess's possession at Ashbridge, and has furnished a clue to several of your own letters to her, which we have intercepted. Moreover, two of the French ambassador's agents, under the disguise of Huguenot preachers, have been arrested, and have revealed

his treasonable designs. Having thus fairly told you the nature and extent of the evidence against you, I would recommend you to plead guilty, and throw yourself upon the Queen's mercy."

"If you are satisfied with the information you have obtained, my lord," returned Courtenay, "you can require nothing further from me."

"Yes;—the names of your associates," rejoined Gardiner.

"The rack should not induce me to betray them," replied Courtenay.

"But a more persuasive engine may," rejoined the chancellor. "What if I offer you Elizabeth's hand provided you will give up all concerned in this plot?"

"I reject it," replied the earl, struggling between his sense of duty and passion.

"Then I must call the guard," returned the chancellor.

"Hold!" cried Courtenay, "I would barter my soul to the enemy of mankind to possess Elizabeth. Swear to me she shall be mine, and I will reveal all."

Gardiner gave the required pledge.

"Yet if I confess, I shall sign my own condemnation, and that of the princess," hesitated Courtenay.

"Not so," rejoined the chancellor. "In the last session of parliament it was enacted, that those only should suffer death for treason who had assisted at its commission, either by taking arms themselves, or aiding directly and personally those who *had* taken them. Such as have simply known or approved the crime are excepted—and your case is among the latter class. But do not let us tarry here. Come with me to my cabinet, and I will resolve all your scruples."

"And you will ensure me the hand of the princess?" said Courtenay.

"Undoubtedly," answered Gardiner. "Have I not sworn it?"

And they quitted the presence-chamber.

No sooner were they gone, than two persons stepped

from behind the arras where they had remained concealed during the foregoing conversation. They were De Noailles and Sir Thomas Wyat.

"Perfidious villain!" cried the latter, "I breathe more freely since he is gone. I had great difficulty in preventing myself from stabbing him on the spot."

"It would have been a useless waste of blood," replied De Noailles. "It was fortunate that I induced you to listen to their conversation. We must instantly provide for our own safety, and that of our friends. The insurrection must no longer be delayed."

"It shall not be delayed an hour," replied Wyat. "I have six thousand followers in Kent, who only require to see my banner displayed to flock round it. Captain Bret and his company of London trainbands are eagerly expecting our rising. Throckmorton will watch over the proceedings in the city. Vice-Admiral Winter, with his squadron of seven sail, now in the river, under orders to escort Philip of Spain, will furnish us with ordnance and ammunition; and, if need be, with the crews under his command."

"Nothing can be better," replied De Noailles. "We must get the Duke of Suffolk out of the Tower, and hasten to Lord Guilford Dudley, with whom some plan must be instantly concerted. Sir Peter Carew must start forthwith for Devonshire,—Sir James Croft for Wales. Your destination is Kent. If Courtenay had not proved a traitor, we would have placed him on the throne. As it is, my advice is that neither Elizabeth nor Jane shall be proclaimed, but Mary Stuart."

"There the policy of France peeps out," replied Wyat. "But I will proclaim none of them. We will compel the Queen to give up this match, and drive the Spaniard from our shores."

"As you will," replied De Noailles hastily. "Do not let us remain longer here, or it may be impossible to quit the fortress."

With this, they left the palace, and seeking the Duke of Suffolk, contrived to mix him up among their attendants, and so to elude the vigilance of the warders. As soon as they were out of the Tower, Sir Thomas Wyat embarked in a wherry, manned by four rowers, and took the direction of Gravesend. De Noailles and the Duke of Suffolk hastened to Sion House, where they found Lord Guilford Dudley seated with Jane and Cholmondeley. On their appearance, Dudley started to his feet, and exclaimed, "We are betrayed!"

"We are," replied De Noailles. "Courtenay has played the traitor. But this is of no moment, as his assistance would have been of little avail, and his pretensions to the crown might have interfered with the rights of your consort. Sir Thomas Wyat has set out for Kent. We must collect all the force we can, and retire to some place of concealment till his messengers arrive with intelligence that he is marching towards London. We mean to besiege the Tower and secure the Queen's person."

"Dudley," cried Jane, "if you have one spark of honour, gratitude, or loyalty left, you will take no part in this insurrection."

"Mary is no longer Queen," replied her husband, bending the knee before her. "To you, Jane, belongs that title, and it will be for you to decide whether she shall live or not."

"The battle is not yet won," observed the Duke of Suffolk. "Let us obtain the crown before we pass sentence on those who have usurped it."

"The Lady Jane must accompany us," whispered De Noailles to Dudley. "If she falls into the hands of our enemies, she may be used as a formidable weapon against us."

"My lord," cried Jane, kneeling to the Duke of Suffolk; "if my supplications fail to move my husband, do not you turn a deaf ear to them. Believe me, this plot will totally fail, and conduct us all to the scaffold."

"The duke cannot retreat if he would, madam," interposed De Noailles. "Courtenay has betrayed us all to Gardiner, and ere now I doubt not officers are despatched to arrest us."

"Jane, you must come with us," cried Dudley.

"Never," she replied, rising. "I will not stir from this spot. I implore you and my father to remain here likewise, and submit yourselves to the mercy of the Queen."

"And do you think such conduct befitting the son of the great Duke of Northumberland?" replied Dudley. "No, madam, the die is cast. My course is taken. You *must* come with us. There is no time for preparation. Let horses be brought round instantly," he added, turning to his esquire.

"Father, dear father," cried Jane, "you will not go."

But the duke averted his gaze from her, and rushed out of the room. De Noailles made a significant gesture to Dudley, and followed him.

"Jane," cried Dudley, taking her hand, "I entreat—nay command you to accompany me."

"Dudley," she replied, "I cannot—will not—obey you in this. If I could, I would detain you. But as I cannot, I will take no part in your criminal designs."

"Farewell for ever, then," rejoined Dudley, breaking from her. "Since you abandon me in this extremity, and throw off my authority, I shall no longer consider myself bound to you by any ties."

"Stay," replied Jane. "You overturn all my good resolutions. I cannot part thus."

"I knew it," replied Dudley, straining her to his bosom. "You will go with me?"

"I will," replied Jane, "since you will have it so."

"Come, then," cried Dudley, taking her hand, and leading her towards the door—"to the throne!"

"No," replied Jane sadly—"to the scaffold!"

—W. H. Ainsworth, *Tower of London.*

"'Farewell for ever then,' rejoined Dudley."

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XVIII

How the Queen Visited Her Favourite at Kenilworth

A SHOUT of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous that the country echoed for miles round, caught up by the guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the Queen was to advance, ran like wildfire to the castle, and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the Royal Chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements; but the noise of drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was but faintly heard amidst the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the park, and, broadening and brightening as it came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led towards the Gallery-tower; which was lined on either hand by the retainers of the Earl of Leicester. The word was passed along the line, "The Queen! The Queen! Silence, and stand fast!" Onward came the cavalcade, illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horsemen, which cast a light like that of broad day all around the procession, but especially on the principal group, of which the Queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a

milk-white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity; and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage, you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court, who rode beside her Majesty, had taken especial care that their own external appearance should not be more glorious than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnificence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far famed for splendour and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host, as of her Master of the Horse. The black steed which he mounted had not a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the Earl at large expense for this royal occasion. As the noble animal chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth, and specked his well-formed limbs as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held, and the proud steed which he bestrode; for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship, and all other exercises belonging to his quality. He was bareheaded, as were all the courtiers in the train; and the red torchlight shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject, to show himself sensible of the high

honour which the Queen was conferring on him, and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the occasion, some of the Earl's personal attendants remarked that he was unusually pale, and they expressed to each other their fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health.

The train, male and female, who attended immediately upon the Queen's person, were of course of the bravest and the fairest—the highest born nobles, and the wisest counsellors, of that distinguished reign, to repeat whose names were but to weary the reader. Behind came a long crowd of knights and gentlemen, whose rank and birth, however distinguished, were thrown into shade, as their persons into the rear of a procession, whose front was of such august majesty.

Thus marshalled, the cavalcade approached the Gallery-tower, which formed the extreme barrier of the castle.

Amidst bursts of music, which, as if the work of enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by distant space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance were gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth crossed the Gallery-tower, and came upon the long bridge, which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower, and which was already as light as day, so many torches had been fastened to the palisades on either side. Most of the nobles here alighted, and sent their horses to the neighbouring village of Kenilworth, following the Queen on foot, as did the gentlemen who had stood in array to receive her at the Gallery-tower.

The Queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge than a new spectacle was provided; for as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants

formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and, issuing from behind a small heronry, where it had been concealed, floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-coloured silken mantle, bound with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ankles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair, she wore a crown or chaplet of artificial mistletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony tipped with silver. Two nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake, renowned in the stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Mountforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets, great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport, which the castle and its environs, which lake or land could afford.

The Queen received this address also with great courtesy, and made answer in raillery, "We thought this lake had belonged to our own dominions, fair dame; but since so famed a lady claims it for hers, we will be glad at some other time to have further communing with you touching our joint interests."

At the same time that the Queen was about to enter the castle, that memorable discharge of fireworks by water and land took place, which Master Laneham has strained all his eloquence to describe.

It is by no means our purpose to detail minutely all the princely festivities of Kenilworth, after the fashion of Master Robert Laneham. It is sufficient to say, that under discharge of the splendid fireworks, which we would have borrowed Laneham's eloquence to describe, the Queen entered the base-court of Kenilworth, through Mortimer's Tower, and moving on through pageants of heathen gods and heroes of antiquity, who offered gifts and compliments on the bended knee, at length found her way to the great hall of the castle, gorgeously hung for her reception with the richest silken tapestry, misty with perfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. From the highly carved oaken roof hung a superb chandelier of gilt bronze, formed like a spread eagle, whose outstretched wings supported three male and three female figures, grasping a pair of branches in each hand. The hall was thus illuminated by twenty-four torches of wax. At the upper end of the splendid apartment was a state canopy, overshadowing a royal throne, and beside it was a door, which opened to a long suite of apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the Queen and her ladies, whenever it should be her pleasure to be private.

The Earl of Leicester having handed the Queen up to her throne, and seated her there, knelt down before her, and kissing the hand which she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily mingled

with the air of loyal devotion, he thanked her, in terms of the deepest gratitude, for the highest honour which a sovereign could render to a subject. So handsome did he look when kneeling before her, that Elizabeth was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer than there was, strictly speaking, necessity for; and ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near, as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness, that seemed to intimate she would, if she dared, have made the motion a slight caress.

She at length raised him, and, standing beside the throne, he explained to her the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation, all of which received her prompt and gracious approbation. The Earl then prayed her Majesty for permission, that he himself, and the nobles who had been in attendance upon her during the journey, might retire for a few minutes, and put themselves into a guise more fitting for dutiful attendance, during which space, those gentlemen of worship (pointing to Varney, Blount, Tressilian, and others), who had already put themselves into fresh attire, would have the honour of keeping her presence-chamber.

"Be it so, my lord," answered the Queen: "you could manage a theatre well, who can thus command a double set of actors. For ourselves, we will receive your courtesies this evening but clownishly, since it is not our purpose to change our riding attire, being in effect something fatigued with a journey, which the concourse of our good people hath rendered slow, though the love they have shown our person hath, at the same time, made it delightful."

Leicester, having received this permission, retired accordingly, and was followed by those nobles who had attended the Queen to Kenilworth in person. The gentlemen who had preceded them, and were of course dressed for the solemnity, remained in attendance. But being most of them of rather inferior rank, they remained at an awful

distance from the throne which Elizabeth occupied. The Queen's sharp eye soon distinguished Raleigh amongst them, with one or two others who were personally known to her, and she instantly made them a sign to approach, and accosted them very graciously. Raleigh, in particular, the adventure of whose cloak, as well as the incident of the verses, remained on her mind, was very graciously received; and to him she most frequently applied for information concerning the names and rank of those who were in presence. These he communicated concisely, and not without some traits of humorous satire, by which Elizabeth seemed much amused. "And who is yonder clownish fellow?" she said, looking at Tressilian, whose soiled dress on this occasion greatly obscured his good mien.

"A poet, if it please your Grace," replied Raleigh.

"I might have guessed that from his careless garb," said Elizabeth. "I have known some poets so thoughtless as to throw their cloaks into gutters."

"It must have been when the sun dazzled both their eyes and their judgment," answered Raleigh.

The lower door was opened, and Leicester, accompanied by several of his kinsmen, and of the nobles who had embraced his faction, re-entered the castle-hall.

The favourite Earl was now apparelled all in white, his shoes being of white velvet; his under-stocks (or stockings) of knit silk; his upper stocks of white velvet, lined with cloth of silver, which was shown at the slashed part of the middle thigh; his doublet of cloth of silver, the close jerkin of white velvet, embroidered with silver and seed-pearl, his girdle and the scabbard of his sword of white velvet with golden buckles; his poniard and sword hilted and mounted with gold; and over all, a rich loose robe of white satin, with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter itself around his knee, completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester; which were so well matched by his fair stature, graceful

gesture, fine proportion of body, and handsome countenance, that at that moment he was admitted by all who saw him, as the goodliest person whom they had ever looked upon. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired, but, in point of splendour and gracefulness of mien, Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency. "We have one piece of royal justice," she said, "to attend to. It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well as in the character of mother and guardian of the English people."

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands; and a similar cold fit came over Varney, whose eyes (seldom during that evening removed from his patron) instantly perceived, from the change in his looks, slight as that was, of what the Queen was speaking. But Leicester had wrought his resolution up to the point which, in his crooked policy, he judged necessary; and when Elizabeth added—"It is of the matter of Varney and Tressilian we speak—is the lady in presence, my lord?" his answer was ready: "Gracious madam, she is not."

Elizabeth bent her brows and compressed her lips, "Our orders were strict and positive, my lord," was her answer

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"And should have been obeyed, good my liege," replied Leicester, "had they been expressed in the form of the lightest wish. But—Varney, step forward—this gentleman will inform your Grace of the cause why the lady" (he could not force his rebellious tongue to utter the words—*his wife*) "cannot attend on your royal presence."

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what indeed he firmly believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for neither did he dare, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife) to wait on her Grace.

"Here," said he, "are attestations from a most learned

physician, whose skill and honour are well known to my good Lord of Leicester; and from an honest and devout Protestant, a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose house she is at present bestowed, that she now labours under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this castle and the neighbourhood of Oxford."

"This alters the matter," said the Queen taking the certificates in her hand, and glancing at their contents—"Let Tressilian come forward. Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart deeply on this Amy Robsart, or Varney. Our power, thanks to God, and the willing obedience of a loving people, is worth much, but there are some things which it cannot compass. We cannot, for example, command the affections of a giddy young girl, or make her love sense and learning better than a courtier's fine doublet; and we cannot control sickness, with which it seems this lady is afflicted, who may not, by reason of such infirmity, attend our court here, as we had required her to do. Here are the testimonials of the physician who hath her under his charge, and the gentleman in whose house she resides, so setting forth."

"Under your Majesty's favour," said Tressilian hastily, and, in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practised on the Queen forgetting his promise to Amy not to reveal where she was, "these certificates speak not the truth."

"How, sir!" said the Queen, "impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! But you shall have a fair hearing. In our presence the meanest of our subjects shall be heard against the proudest, and the least known against the most favoured; therefore you shall be heard fairly, but beware you speak not without a warrant! Take these certificates in your own hand; look at them carefully, and say manfully if you impugn the truth of them, and upon what evidence."

As the Queen spoke, his promise and all its consequences

rushed on the mind of the unfortunate Tressilian, and while it controlled his natural inclination to pronounce that a falsehood which he knew from the evidence of his senses to be untrue, gave an indecision and irresolution to his appearance and utterance, which made strongly against him in the mind of Elizabeth, as well as of all who beheld him. He turned the papers over and over, as if he had been an idiot, incapable of comprehending their contents. The Queen's impatience began to become visible.—"You are a scholar, sir," she said, "and of some note, as I have heard; yet you seem wondrous slow in reading text hand. How say you, are these certificates true or no?"

"Madam," said Tressilian, with obvious embarrassment and hesitation, anxious to avoid admitting evidence which he might afterwards have reason to confute, yet equally desirous to keep his word to Amy, and to give her, as he had promised, space to plead her own cause in her own way—"Madam—Madam, your Grace calls on me to admit evidence which ought to be proved valid by those who found their defence upon it."

"Why, Tressilian, thou art critical as well as poetical," said the Queen, bending on him a brow of displeasure; "methinks these writings, being produced in the presence of the noble Earl to whom this castle pertains, and his honour being appealed to as the guarantee of their authenticity, might be evidence enough for thee. But since thou listest to be so formal—Varney, or rather my Lord of Leicester, for the affair becomes yours" (these words, though spoken at random, thrilled through the Earl's marrow and bones), "what evidence have you as touching these certificates?"

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Leicester,—"So please your Majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here in presence, knows Master Anthony Foster's hand and his character."

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans of usurious in-

terest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he knew him as a wealthy and independent franklin, supposed to be worth much money, and verified the certificate produced to be his handwriting.

"And who speaks to the doctor's certificate?" said the Queen. "Alasco, methinks, is his name."

Masters, her Majesty's physician (not the less willingly that he remembered his repulse from Say's Court, and thought that his present testimony might gratify Leicester, and mortify the Earl of Sussex and his faction), acknowledged he had more than once consulted with Doctor Alasco, and spoke of him as a man of extraordinary learning and hidden acquirements, though not altogether in the regular course of practice. The Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, and the old Countess of Rutland, next sang his praises, and both remembered the thin beautiful Italian hand in which he was wont to write his receipts, and which corresponded to the certificate produced as his.

"And now, I trust, Master Tressilian, this matter is ended," said the Queen. "We will do something ere the night is older to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty something more than boldly; but we were no woman had we not compassion for the wounds which true love deals; so we forgive your audacity, and your uncleansed boots withal, which have wellnigh overpowered my Lord of Leicester's perfumes."

So spoke Elizabeth, whose nicety of scent was one of the characteristics of her organization, as appeared long afterwards when she expelled Essex from her presence, on a charge against his boots similar to that which she now expressed against those of Tressilian.

But Tressilian had by this time collected himself, astonished as he had at first been by the audacity of the falsehood so feasibly supported, and placed in array against the evidence of his own eyes. He rushed forward, kneeled down, and caught the Queen by the skirt of her robe.

"As you are Christian woman," he said, "madam, as you are crowned Queen, to do equal justice among your subjects—as you hope yourself to have fair hearing (which God grant you) at that last bar at which we must all plead, grant me one small request! Decide not this matter so hastily. Give me but twenty-four hours' interval, and I will, at the end of that brief space, produce evidence which will show to demonstration, that these certificates, which state this unhappy lady to be now ill at ease in Oxfordshire, are false as hell!"

"Let go my train, sir!" said Elizabeth, who was startled at his vehemence, though she had too much of lion in her to fear; "the fellow must be distraught—that witty knave, my godson Harrington, must have him into his rhymes of Orlando Furioso! And yet, by this light, there is something strange in the vehemence of his demand. Speak, Tressilian; what wilt thou do if, at the end of these four-and-twenty hours, thou canst not confute a fact so solemnly proved as this lady's illness?"

"I will lay down my head on the block," answered Tressilian.

"Pshaw!" replied the Queen. "God's light, thou speak'st like a fool. What head falls in England, but by just sentence of English law?"

Tressilian was again endeavouring to address the Queen, when Raleigh, in obedience to the orders he had received, interfered, and, with Blount's assistance, half led, half forced him out of the presence-chamber, where he himself indeed began to think his appearance did his cause more harm than good.

"It is a melancholy matter," said the Queen, when Tressilian was withdrawn, "to see a wise and learned man's wit thus pitifully unsettled. Yet this public display of his imperfection of brain plainly shows us that his supposed injury and accusation were fruitless; and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, we remember your suit formerly made to

us in behalf of your faithful servant Varney, whose good gifts and fidelity, as they are useful to you, ought to have due reward from us, knowing well that your lordship, and all you have, are so earnestly devoted to our service. And we render Varney the honour more especially that we are a guest, and we fear a chargeable and troublesome one, under your lordship's roof; and also for the satisfaction of the good old Knight of Devon, Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he hath married; and we trust the especial mark of grace which we are about to confer, may reconcile him to his son-in-law. Your sword, my Lord of Leicester."

The Earl unbuckled his sword, and, taking it by the point, presented on bended knee the hilt to Elizabeth. She took it slowly, drew it from the scabbard, and while the ladies who stood around turned away their eyes with real or affected shuddering, she noted with a curious eye the high polish and rich damasked ornaments upon the glittering blade.

"Had I been a man," she said, "methinks none of my ancestors would have loved a good sword better. As it is with me, I like to look on one, and could, like the Fairy, of whom I have read in some Italian rhymes—were my godson Harrington here, he could tell me the passage—even trim my hair, and arrange my head-gear, in such a steel mirror as this is. Richard Varney, come forth, and kneel down. In the name of God and Saint George, we dub thee knight! Be Faithful, Brave, and Fortunate. Arise, Sir Richard Varney."

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the Sovereign who had done him so much honour.

"The buckling of the spur, and what other rights remain," said the Queen, "may be finished to-morrow in the chapel; for we intend Sir Richard Varney a companion in his honours. And as we must not be partial in conferring such distinction, we mean on this matter to confer with our cousin of Sussex."

That noble Earl, who since his arrival at Kenilworth

and indeed since the commencement of this Progress, had found himself in a subordinate situation to Leicester, was now wearing a heavy cloud on his brow—a circumstance which had not escaped the Queen, who hoped to appease his discontent, and to follow out her system of balancing policy by a mark of peculiar favour, the more gratifying as it was tendered at a moment when his rival's triumph appeared to be complete.

At the summons of Queen Elizabeth, Sussex hastily approached her person; and being asked on which of his followers, being a gentleman and of merit, he would wish the honour of knighthood to be conferred, he answered, with more sincerity than policy, that he would have ventured to speak for Tressilian, to whom he conceived he owed his own life, and who was a distinguished soldier and scholar, besides a man of unstained lineage, "only," he said, "he feared the events of that night——" And then he stopped.

"I am glad your lordship is thus considerate," said Elizabeth; "the events of this night would make us, in the eyes of our subjects, as mad as this poor brain-sick gentleman himself—for we ascribe his conduct to no malice—should we choose this moment to do him grace."

"In that case," said the Earl of Sussex, somewhat discountenanced, "your Majesty will allow me to name my master of the horse, Master Nicholas Blount, a gentleman of fair estate and ancient name, who has served your Majesty both in Scotland and Ireland, and brought away bloody marks on his person, all honourably taken and requited."

The Queen could not help shrugging her shoulders slightly even at this second suggestion; and the Duchess of Rutland, who read in the Queen's manner that she had expected Sussex would have named Raleigh, and thus would have enabled her to gratify her own wish, while she honoured his recommendation, only waited the Queen's assent to what he had proposed, and then said that she hoped, since these two high nobles had been each permitted

to suggest a candidate for the honours of chivalry, she, in behalf of the ladies in presence, might have a similar indulgence.

"I were no woman to refuse you such a boon," said the Queen, smiling.

"Then," pursued the Duchess, "in the name of these fair ladies present, I request your Majesty to confer the rank of knighthood on Walter Raleigh, whose birth, deeds of arms, and promptitude to serve our sex with sword or pen, deserves such distinction from us all."

"Gramercy, fair ladies," said Elizabeth, smiling, "your boon is granted, and the gentle squire Lack-Cloak shall become the good knight Lack-Cloak, at your desire. Let the two aspirants for the honour of chivalry step forward."

Blount was not as yet returned; but Raleigh came forth and, kneeling down, received at the hand of the Virgin Queen that title of honour, which was never conferred on a more distinguished or more illustrious object.

Shortly afterwards Nicholas Blount entered, and, hastily apprized by Sussex, who met him at the door of the hall, of the Queen's gracious purpose regarding him, he was desired to advance towards the throne. It is a sight sometimes seen, and it is both ludicrous and pitiable, when an honest man of plain common sense is surprised, by the coquetry of a pretty woman, or any other cause, into those frivolous fopperies which only sit well upon the youthful, the gay, and those to whom long practice has rendered them a second nature. Poor Blount was in this situation. His head was already giddy from a consciousness of unusual finery, and the supposed necessity of suiting his manners to the gaiety of his dress; and now this sudden view of promotion altogether completed the conquest of the newly inhaled spirit of foppery over his natural disposition, and converted a plain, honest, awkward man into a coxcomb of a new and most ridiculous kind.

The knight-expectant advanced up the hall, the whole

length of which he had unfortunately to traverse, turning out his toes with so much zeal that he presented his leg at every step with its broadside foremost, so that it greatly resembled an old-fashioned table-knife with a curved point, when seen sideways. The rest of his gait was in correspondence with this unhappy amble; and the implied mixture of bashful fear and self-satisfaction was so unutterably ridiculous, that Leicester's friends did not suppress a titter in which many of Sussex's partisans were unable to resist joining, though ready to eat their nails with mortification. Sussex himself lost all patience, and could not forbear whispering into the ear of his friend, "Curse thee! canst thou not walk like a man and a soldier?" an interjection which only made honest Blount start and stop, until a glance at his yellow roses and crimson stockings restored his self-confidence, when on he went at the same pace as before.

The Queen conferred on poor Blount the honour of knighthood with a marked sense of reluctance. That wise Princess was fully aware of the propriety of using great circumspection and economy in bestowing these titles of honour, which the Stewarts, who succeeded to her throne, distributed with an imprudent liberality which greatly diminished their value. Blount had no sooner arisen and retired, than she turned to the Duchess of Rutland. "Our woman wit," she said, "dear Rutland, is sharper than that of those proud things in doublet and hose. Seest thou, out of these three knights, thine is the only true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon?"

"Sir Richard Varney, surely—the friend of my Lord of Leicester—surely *he* has merit," replied the Duchess.

"Varney has a sly countenance, and a smooth tongue," replied the Queen. "I fear me, he will prove a knave—but the promise was of ancient standing. My Lord of Sussex must have lost his own wits, I think, to recommend to us first a madman like Tressilian, and then a clownish

fool like this other fellow. I protest, Rutland, that while he sat on his knees before me, mopping and mowing as if he had scalding porridge in his mouth, I had much ado to forbear cutting him over the pate, instead of striking his shoulder."

"Your Majesty gave him a smart *accolade*," said the Duchess; "we who stood behind heard the blade clatter on his collar-bone, and the poor man fidgeted too as if he felt it."

"I could not help it, wench," said the Queen, laughing; "but we will have this same Sir Nicholas sent to Ireland or Scotland or somewhere, to rid our court of so antique a chevalier; he may be a good soldier in the field, though a preposterous ass in a banqueting-hall."

The discourse became then more general, and soon after there was a summons to the banquet.

In order to obey this signal, the company were under the necessity of crossing the inner court of the castle, that they might reach the new buildings, containing the large banqueting-room, in which preparations for supper were made upon a scale of profuse magnificence, corresponding to the occasion.

In the course of the passage from the hall of reception to the banqueting-room, and especially in the court-yard, the new-made knights were assailed by the heralds, pursuivants, minstrels, etc., with the usual cry of *Largesse, largesse, chevaliers très hardis!* an ancient invocation, intended to awaken the bounty of the acolytes of chivalry towards those whose business it was to register their armorial bearings, and celebrate the deeds by which they were illustrated. The call was of course liberally and courteously answered by those to whom it was addressed. Varney gave his largesse with an affectation of complaisance and humility. Raleigh bestowed his with the graceful ease peculiar to one who has attained his own place, and is familiar with its dignity. Honest Blount gave what his tailor had left him

of his half year's rent, dropping some pieces in his hurry, then stooping down to look for them, and then distributing them amongst the various claimants, with the anxious face and mien of the parish beadle dividing a dole among paupers.

It is unnecessary to say anything of the festivities of the evening, which were so brilliant in themselves, and received with such obvious and willing satisfaction by the Queen, that Leicester retired to his own apartment with all the giddy raptures of successful ambition.

It chanced upon the next morning that one of the earliest of the huntress train, who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase, was the Princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honoured, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber, ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance and the gardens which are connected with the castle yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the Earl's arm affording his Sovereign the occasional support which she required, where flights of steps, then a favourite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace, and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the Queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the Queen and the Earl, who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, and favoured servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple, whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's silvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *aiguillettes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons; and was, therefore, well suited at once to her height, and to the dignity of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting suit of Lincoln-green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric, which sustained a bugle-horn, and a wood-knife instead of a sword, became its master, as did his other investments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

The conversation of Elizabeth and the favourite Earl has not reached us in detail. But those who watched at some distance (and the eyes of courtiers and court ladies are right sharp) were of opinion, that on no occasion did the dignity of Elizabeth, in gesture and motion, seem so decidedly to soften away into a mien expressive of indecision and tenderness. Her step was not only slow, but even unequal, a thing most unwonted in her carriage; her looks seemed bent on the ground, and there was a timid disposition to withdraw from her companion, which external gesture in females often indicates exactly the opposite tendency in the secret mind. The Duchess of Rutland, who ventured nearest, was even heard to aver, that she discerned a tear in Elizabeth's eye, and a blush on her cheek; and still farther, "She bent her looks on the ground to avoid mine," said the Duchess; "she who, in her ordinary mood, could look down a lion." To what conclusion these symptoms led is sufficiently evident; nor were they probably entirely groundless. The progress of a private conversation, betwixt two persons of different sexes, is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very different perhaps from what they them-

selves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended, and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court; hounds yelled in their couples, and yeomen, rangers, and prickers, lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view, or, to speak more justly towards him, had become engaged in it without pre-meditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that have crossed his path by accident. The Queen—an accomplished and handsome woman—the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain, had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed; and the Earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

"No, Dudley," said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents—"No, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her Sovereign—No, Leicester, urge it no more. Were I as others, free to seek my own happiness—then, indeed—but it cannot—cannot be. Delay the chase—delay it for half an hour—and leave me, my lord."

"How, leave you, madam!" said Leicester; "has my madness offended you?"

"No, Leicester, not so!" answered the Queen hastily; "but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go—but go not far from hence—and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy."

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The Queen stood gazing

"While she spoke thus Dudley bowed deeply."

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after him, and murmured to herself—"Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—but—no—no—Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone."

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the Queen turned into an adjoining grotto.

The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient Druidical monuments called rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace towards the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look, and her mien its air of command.

It was then the Queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain, which occupied the inmost recess of the twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria, and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented the Naiad, whose inspirations gave laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy Robsart, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form which approached her, and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady, who entered the grotto alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the Queen's know-

ing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands, perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned. Her dress was of pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian nymph, such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure, where so many masquers and revellers were assembled, so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living form was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and the fixed eye.

Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached within a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so cunningly fashioned, that by the doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality. She stopped, therefore, and fixed upon this interesting object her princely look with so much keenness that the astonishment which had kept Amy immovable gave way to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes, and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the Sovereign. Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving this slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage, and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness,—"How now, fair Nymph of this lovely grotto—art thou spell-bound and struck with dumbness by the charms of

the wicked enchanter whom men term Fear? We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee."

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate Countess dropped on her knee before the Queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in the Queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

"What may this mean?" she said; "this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel—what wouldst thou have with us?"

"Your protection, madam," faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

"Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it," replied the Queen; "but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection?"

Amy hastily endeavoured to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband; and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the Queen's repeated inquiries, in what she sought protection, only falter out, "Alas! I know not."

"This is folly, maiden," said Elizabeth impatiently; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant which irritated her curiosity, as well as interested her feelings. "The sick man must tell his malady to the physician, nor are WE accustomed to ask questions so oft without receiving an answer."

"I request—I implore," stammered forth the unfortunate Countess,—"I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney." She choked wellnigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

"What, Varney—Sir Richard Varney—the servant of

Lord Leicester? What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?"

"I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to——"

"To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless," said Elizabeth. "Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost. Thou art," she said, bending on the Countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul,—"thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

"Forgive me—forgive me—most gracious Princess!" said Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen.

"For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?" said Elizabeth; "for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches—thou didst deceive thine old and honoured father—thy look confesses it,—cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it,—and married this same Varney?"

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the Queen eagerly, with, "No, madam, no—as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of Destruction!"

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, "Why, God ha' mercy, woman!—I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman," she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practised on her, "tell me, woman—for by God's day, I WILL know—whose wife, or whose paramour, art thou? Speak out, and be speedy—thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth."

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of the precipice, which she saw but could not avoid—permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended Queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, "The Earl of Leicester knows it all."

"The Earl of Leicester!" said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment. "The Earl of Leicester!" she repeated, with kindling anger. "Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him—he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord, and the truest-hearted gentleman in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!"

As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed Queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth rapidly advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified Countess, whom she still held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant Queen.

Leicester was at this moment the centre of a splendid group of lords and ladies, assembled together under an arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place to attend the commands of her Majesty when the hunting-party should go forward, and their astonishment may be imagined when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance towards them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed, with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII.

mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, extenuated, half dead, yet still lovely female, whom the Queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles who pressed towards her, under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill. "Where is my Lord of Leicester?" she said, in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around. "Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!"

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveller, he could not gaze upon the smouldering chasm, which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with a political affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning, the half-uttered, half-intimated congratulations of the courtiers upon the favour of the Queen, carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning, from which most of them seemed to augur that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the Queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and, supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded to the ears of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-call that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, "Knowest thou this woman?"

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his

pride to burst its strong conjunction, and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave and battlement, stood fast; and it was the proud master himself who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flagstones on which she stood.

"Leicester," said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, "could I think thou hast practised on me—on me thy Sovereign—on me thy confiding, thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!"

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swoln with contending emotions, and only replied, "My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers; to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service."

"What, my lords!" said Elizabeth, looking around, "we are defied, I think—defied in the castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man! My Lord Shrewsbury, you are marshal of England, attach him of high treason!"

"Whom does your Grace mean?" said Shrewsbury, much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

"Whom should I mean but that traitor Dudley, Earl of Leicester! Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into instant custody. I say, villain, make haste!"

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the Queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, "And it is like your Grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient"

"Patient—God's life!" exclaimed the Queen—"name not the word to me; thou know'st not of what he is guilty!"

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended Sovereign, instantly (and alas! how many women have done the same) forgot her own wrongs, and her own danger, in her apprehensions for him, and throwing herself before the Queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, "He is guiltless, madam—he is guiltless; no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester!"

"Why, minion," answered the Queen, "didst not thou thyself say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?"

"Did I say so?" repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency and of self-interest; "oh, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!"

"Woman," said Elizabeth, "I will know who has moved thee to this, or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace."

As the Queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him for ever if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the Queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honour, to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his Countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

"What means this saucy intrusion?" said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man altogether overwhelmed

with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, my liege, pardon! or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!"

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly towards Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung back, and, uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—"but spare," she exclaimed, "my sight and hearing what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain!"

"And why, sweetheart?" said the Queen, moved by a new impulse; "what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee?"

"Oh, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury—he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him!"

"Beshrew me, but I think thou art distraught already," answered the Queen. "My Lord Hunsdon, look to this poor distressed young woman, and let her be safely bestowed, and in honest keeping, till we require her to be forthcoming."

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting, or by some other motive, offered their services to look after her; but the Queen briefly answered, "Ladies, under favour, no. You have all (give God thanks) sharp ears and nimble tongues—our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest. Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech of her."

"By our lady!" said Hunsdon, taking in his strong sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, "she is a lovely child; and though a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own ladybirds of daughters."

So saying, he carried her off unresistingly and almost unconsciously, his war-worn locks and long grey beard mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong square shoulder. The Queen followed him with her eye—she had already, with that self-command which form so necessary a part of a Sovereign's accomplishment, suppressed every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. "My Lord of Hunsdon says well," she observed; "he is indeed but a rough nurse for so tender a babe."

"My Lord of Hunsdon," said the Dean of St. Asaph, "I speak it not in defamation of his more noble qualities, hath a broad licence in speech, and garnishes his discourse somewhat too freely with the cruel and superstitious oaths, which savour both of profaneness and of old papistrie."

"It is the fault of his blood, Mr. Dean," said the Queen, turning sharply round upon the reverend dignitary as she spoke; "and you may blame mine for the same distemperature. The Boleyns were ever a hot and plain-spoken race, more hasty to speak their mind than careful to choose their expressions. And, by my word—I hope there is no sin in that affirmation—I question if it were much cooled by mixing with that of Tudor."

As she made this last observation, she smiled graciously, and stole her eyes almost insensibly round to seek those of the Earl of Leicester, to whom she now began to think she had spoken with hasty harshness upon the unfounded suspicion of a moment.

The Queen's eyes found the Earl in no mood to accept the implied offer of conciliation. His own looks had

followed with late and rueful repentance the faded form which Hunsdon had just borne from the presence; they now reposed gloomily on the ground, but more—so at least it seemed to Elizabeth—with the expression of one who has received an unjust affront, than of him who is conscious of guilt. She turned her face angrily from him, and said to Varney, "Speak, Sir Richard, and explain these riddles — thou hast sense and the use of speech, at least, which elsewhere we look for in vain."

As she said this, she darted another resentful glance towards Leicester, while the wily Varney hastened to tell his own story.

"Your Majesty's piercing eye," he said, "has already detected the cruel malady of my beloved lady, which, unhappy that I am, I would not suffer to be expressed in the certificate of her physician, seeking to conceal what has now broken out with so much the more scandal."

"She is then distraught?" said the Queen—"indeed, we doubted not of it—her whole demeanour bears it out. I found her moping in a corner of yonder grotto; and every word she spoke—which indeed I dragged from her as by the rack—she instantly recalled and forswore. But how came she hither? Why had you her not in safe keeping?"

"My gracious liege," said Varney, "the worthy gentleman under whose charge I left her, Master Anthony Foster, has come hither but now, as fast as man and horse can travel, to show me of her escape, which she managed with the art peculiar to many who are afflicted with this malady. He is at hand for examination."

"Let it be for another time," said the Queen. "But, Sir Richard, we envy you not your domestic felicity; your lady railed on you bitterly, and seemed ready to swoon at beholding you."

"It is the nature of persons in her disorder, so please your Grace," answered Varney, "to be ever most inveter-

ate in their spleen against those, whom, in their better moments, they hold nearest and dearest."

"We have heard so, indeed," said Elizabeth, "and give faith to the saying."

"May your Grace then be pleased," said Varney, "to command my unfortunate wife to be delivered into the custody of her friends?"

Leicester partly started; but, making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while Elizabeth answered sharply, "You are something too hasty, Master Varney; we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have license, however, to see her, that if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you—such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple—you may make it up, without further scandal to our court, or trouble to ourselves."

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked towards Leicester, and said, with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, "Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families; and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts. My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive."

Leicester smoothed his brow, as by an effort, but the trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, "that he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so, could commit no injury towards him."

Elizabeth seemed content with this reply, and intimated her pleasure that the sports of the morning should proceed. The bugles sounded—the hounds bayed—the horses

pranced—but the courtiers and ladies sought the amusement to which they were summoned with hearts very different from those which had leaped to the morning's *reveille*. There was doubt, and fear, and expectation on every brow, and surmise and intrigue in every whisper.

Blount took an opportunity to whisper into Raleigh's ear, "This storm came like a levanter in the Mediterranean."

"*Varium et mutabile*," answered Raleigh, in a similar tone.

"Nay, I know nought of your Latin," said Blount; "but I thank God Tressilian took not the sea during that hurricane. He could scarce have missed shipwreck, knowing as he does so little how to trim his sails to a court gale."

"Thou wouldst have instructed him?" said Raleigh.

"Why, I have profited by my time as well as thou, Sir Walter," replied honest Blount. "I am knight as well as thou, and of the earlier creation."

"Now, God further thy wit," said Raleigh; "but for Tressilian, I would I knew what were the matter with him. He told me this morning he would not leave his chamber for the space of twelve hours or thereby, being bound by a promise. This lady's madness, when he shall learn it, will not, I fear, cure his infirmity. The moon is at the fullest, and men's brains are working like yeast. But hark! they sound to mount. Let us to horse, Blount: we young knights must deserve our spurs."

It was afterwards remembered, that during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearing of Leicester and of Varney were totally different from their usual demeanour. Sir Richard Varney had been held rather a man of counsel and of action, than a votary of pleasure. Business, whether civil or military, seemed always to be his proper sphere; and while in festivals and revels, although he well understood how to trick

them up and present them, his own part was that of a mere spectator; or, if he exercised his wit, it was in a rough, caustic, and severe manner, rather as if he scoffed at the exhibition and the guests, than shared the common pleasure.

But upon the present day his character seemed changed. He mixed among the younger courtiers and ladies, and appeared for the moment to be actuated by a spirit of light-hearted gaiety, which rendered him a match for the liveliest. Those who had looked upon him as a man given up to graver and more ambitious pursuits, a bitter sneerer and passer of sarcasms at the expense of those, who, taking life as they find it, were disposed to snatch at each pastime it presents, now perceived with astonishment that his wit could carry as smooth an edge as their own, his laugh be as lively, and his brow as unclouded. By what art of damnable hypocrisy he could draw this veil of gaiety over the black thoughts of one of the worst of human bosoms, must remain unintelligible to all but his compeers, if any such ever existed; but he was a man of extraordinary powers, and those powers were unhappily dedicated in all their energy to the very worst of purposes.

It was entirely different with Leicester. However habituated his mind usually was to play the part of a good courtier, and appear gay, assiduous, and free from all care but that of enhancing the pleasure of the moment, while his bosom internally throbbed with the pangs of unsatisfied ambition, and jealousy, or resentment, his heart had now a yet more dreadful guest, whose workings could not be overshadowed or suppressed; and you might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow, that his thoughts were far absent from the scenes in which he was compelling himself to play a part. He looked, moved, and spoke, as if by a succession of continued efforts; and it seemed as if his will had in some degree lost the promptitude of command over the acute mind and goodly form of which it was the regent. His actions and gestures, instead of appearing the consequence

of simple volition, seemed, like those of an automaton, to wait the revolution of some internal machinery ere they could be performed; and his words fell from him piecemeal, interrupted, as if he had first to think what he was to say, then how it was to be said, and as if, after all, it was only by an effort of continued attention that he completed a sentence without forgetting both the one and the other.

The singular effects which these distractions of mind produced upon the behaviour and conversation of the most accomplished courtier of England, as they were visible to the lowest and dullest menial who approached his person, could not escape the notice of the most intelligent princess of the age. Nor is there the least doubt that the alternate negligence and irregularity of his manner would have called down Elizabeth's severe displeasure on the Earl of Leicester, had it not occurred to her to account for it, by supposing that the apprehension of that displeasure which she had expressed towards him with such vivacity that very morning, was dwelling upon the spirits of her favourite, and, spite of his efforts to the contrary, distracted the usual graceful tenor of his mien, and the charms of his conversation. When this idea, so flattering to female vanity, had once obtained possession of her mind, it proved a full and satisfactory apology for the numerous errors and mistakes of the Earl of Leicester; and the watchful circle around observed with astonishment, that, instead of resenting his repeated negligence, and want of even ordinary attention (although these were points on which she was usually extremely punctilious), the Queen sought, on the contrary, to afford him time and means to recollect himself, and deigned to assist him in doing so, with an indulgence which seemed altogether inconsistent with her usual character. It was clear, however, that this could not last much longer, and that Elizabeth must finally put another and more severe construction on Leicester's uncourteous conduct, when the

Earl was summoned by Varney to speak with him in a different apartment.

After having had the message twice delivered to him, he rose, and was about to withdraw, as it were, by instinct—then stopped, and turning round, entreated permission of the Queen to absent himself for a brief space upon matters of pressing importance.

"Go, my lord," said the Queen; "we are aware our presence must occasion sudden and unexpected occurrences which require to be provided for on the instant. Yet, my lord, as you would have us believe ourself your welcome and honoured guest, we entreat you to think less of our good cheer, and favour us with more of your good countenance than we have this day enjoyed; for, whether prince or peasant be the guest, the welcome of the host will always be the better part of the entertainment. Go, my lord; and we trust to see you return with an unwrinkled brow, and those free thoughts which you are wont to have at the disposal of your friends."

Leicester only bowed low in answer to this rebuke, and retired.

The noble Lord of the Castle indulged in a prolonged absence, and some anxiety and wonder took place in the presence-hall. But great was the delight of his friends when they saw him enter as a man, from whose bosom, to all human seeming, a weight of care had been just removed.

With Elizabeth, Leicester played his game as one to whom her natural strength of talent, and her weakness in one or two particular points, were well known. He was too wary to exchange on a sudden the sullen personage which he had played before; but, on approaching her, it seemed softened into a melancholy, which had a touch of tenderness in it, and which, in the course of conversing with Elizabeth, and as she dropped in compassion one mark of favour after another to console him, passed into a flow of affectionate gallantry, the most assiduous, the most delicate, the most

insinuating, yet at the same time the most respectful, with which a Queen was ever addressed by a subject. Elizabeth listened, as in a sort of enchantment; her jealousy of power was lulled asleep; her resolution to forsake all social or domestic ties, and dedicate herself exclusively to the care of her people, began to be shaken, and once more the star of Dudley culminated in the court-horizon.

But Leicester did not enjoy this triumph over nature and over conscience without its being embittered to him, not only by the internal rebellion of his feelings against the violence which he exercised over them, but by many accidental circumstances, which, in the course of the banquet, and during the subsequent amusements of the evening, jarred upon that nerve, the least vibration of which was agony.

The courtiers were, for example, in the great hall, after having left the banqueting-room, awaiting the appearance of a splendid masque, which was the expected entertainment of this evening, when the Queen interrupted a wild career of wit, which the Earl of Leicester was running against Lord Willoughby, Raleigh, and some other courtiers, by saying—"We will impeach you of high treason, my lord, if you proceed in this attempt to slay us with laughter. And here comes a thing may make us all grave at his pleasure, our learned physician Masters, with news belike of our poor suppliant, Lady Varney—nay, my lord, we will not have you leave us, for this being a dispute betwixt married persons, we do not hold our own experience deep enough to decide thereon, without good counsel. How now, Masters, what think'st thou of the runaway bride?"

The smile with which Leicester had been speaking, when the Queen interrupted him, remained arrested on his lips, as if it had been carved there by the chisel of Michael Angelo, or of Chantrey; and he listened to the speech of the physician with the same immovable cast of countenance.

"The Lady Varney, gracious Sovereign," said the court physician Masters, "is sullen, and would hold little conference with me touching the state of her health, talking wildly of being soon to plead her own cause before your own presence, and of answering no meaner person's enquiries."

"Now, the heavens forefend!" said the Queen; "we have already suffered from the misconstructions and broils which seem to follow this poor brain-sick lady wherever she comes. Think you not so, my lord?" she added, appealing to Leicester, with something in her look that indicated regret, even tenderly expressed, for their disagreement of that morning. Leicester compelled himself to bow low. The utmost force he could exert was inadequate to the farther effort of expressing in words his acquiescence in the Queen's sentiment.

"You are vindictive," she said, "my lord; but we will find time and place to punish you. But once more to this same trouble-mirth, this Lady Varney. What of her health, Masters?"

"She is sullen, madam, as I already said," replied Masters, "and refuses to answer interrogatories, or be amenable to the authority of the mediciner. I conceive her to be possessed with a delirium, which I incline to term rather *hypochondria* than *phrenesis*; and I think she were best cared for by her husband in his own house, and removed from all this bustle of pageants, which disturbs her weak brain with the most fantastic phantoms. She drops hints as if she were some great person in disguise—some Countess or Princess perchance. God help them, such are often the hallucinations of these infirm persons!"

"Nay, then," said the Queen, "away with her with all speed. Let Varney care for her with fitting humanity; but let them rid the castle of her forthwith. She will think herself lady of all, I warrant you. It is pity so fair a form,

however, should have an infirm understanding. What think you, my lord?"

"It is pity indeed," said the Earl, repeating the words like a task which was set him.

"But, perhaps," said Elizabeth, "you do not join with us in our opinion of her beauty; and indeed we have known men prefer a statelier and more Juno-like form, to that drooping fragile one that hung its head like a broken lily. Ay, men are tyrants, my lord, who esteem the animation of the strife above the triumph of an unresisting conquest, and, like sturdy champions, love best those women who can wage contest with them.—I could think with you, Rutland, that give my Lord of Leicester such a piece of painted wax for a bride, he would have wished her dead ere the end of the honeymoon."

As she said this, she looked on Leicester so expressively that, while his heart revolted against the egregious falsehood, he did himself so much violence as to reply in a whisper that Leicester's love was more lowly than her Majesty deemed, since it was settled where he could never command, but must ever obey.

The Queen blushed, and bid him be silent; yet looked as if she expected that he would not obey her commands. But at that moment the flourish of trumpets and kettle-drums from a high balcony which overlooked the hall, announced the entrance of the masquers, and relieved Leicester from the horrible state of constraint and dissimulation in which the result of his own duplicity had placed him.

The masque which entered consisted of four separate bands, which followed each other at brief intervals, each consisting of six principal persons and as many torch-bearers, and each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied.

So much did this part of the pageant interest the menials and others of the lower class then in the castle, that many

of them forgot even the reverence due to the Queen's presence, so far as to thrust themselves into the lower part of the hall.

The Earl of Leicester, seeing his officers had some difficulty to repel these intruders without more disturbance than was fitting where the Queen was in presence, arose and went himself to the bottom of the hall; Elizabeth, at the same time, with her usual feeling for the common people, requesting that they might be permitted to remain undisturbed to witness the pageant. Leicester went under this pretext; but his real motive was to gain a moment to himself, and to relieve his mind, were it but for one instant, from the dreadful task of hiding, under the guise of gaiety and gallantry, the lacerating pangs of shame, anger, remorse, and thirst for vengeance. He imposed silence by his look and sign upon the vulgar crowd, at the lower end of the apartment.

Leicester again made his way amid the obsequious crowd, which divided to give him passage, and resumed his place, envied and admired, beside the person of his Sovereign. But, could the bosom of him thus admired and envied have been laid open before the inhabitants of that crowded hall, with all its dark thoughts of guilty ambition, blighted affection, deep vengeance, and conscious sense of meditated cruelty, crossing each other like spectres in the circle of some foul enchantress,—which of them, from the most ambitious noble in the courtly circle, down to the most wretched menial, who lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change characters with the favourite of Elizabeth, and the Lord of Kenilworth!

New tortures awaited him as soon as he had rejoined Elizabeth.

"You come in time, my lord," she said, "to decide a dispute between us ladies. Here has Sir Richard Varney asked our permission to depart from the castle with his infirm lady, having, as he tells us, your lordship's consent

to his absence, so he can obtain ours. Certes, we have no will to withhold him from the affectionate charge of this poor young person—but you are to know, that Sir Richard Varney hath this day shown himself so much captivated with these ladies of ours, that here is our Duchess of Rutland says, he will carry his poor insane wife no farther than the lake, plunge her in, to tenant the crystal palaces that the enchanted nymph told us of, and return a jolly widower, to dry his tears, and to make up the loss among our train. How say you, my lord?—We have seen Varney under two or three different guises—you know what are his proper attributes—think you he is capable of playing his lady such a knave's trick?"

Leicester was confounded, but the danger was urgent, and a reply absolutely necessary. "The ladies," he said, "think too lightly of one of their own sex, in supposing she could deserve such a fate, or too ill of ours, to think it could be inflicted upon an innocent female."

"Hear him, my ladies," said Elizabeth; "like all his sex, he would excuse their cruelty by imputing fickleness to us."

"Say not *us*, madam," replied the Earl; "we say that meaner women, like the lesser lights of heaven, have revolutions and phases, but who shall impute mutability to the sun, or to Elizabeth?"

The discourse presently afterwards assumed a less perilous tendency, and Leicester continued to support his part in it with spirit, at whatever expense of mental agony. So pleasing did it seem to Elizabeth, that the castle bell had sounded midnight ere she retired from the company, a circumstance unusual in her quiet and regular habits of disposing of time. Her departure was of course the signal for breaking up the company, who dispersed to their several places of repose, to dream over the pastimes of the day, or to anticipate those of the morrow.

The amusement with which Elizabeth and her court were

next day to be regaled, was an exhibition by the true-hearted men of Coventry, who were to represent the strife between the English and the Danes, agreeably to a custom long preserved in their ancient borough, and warranted for truth by old histories and chronicles. In this pageant, one party of the townsfolk presented the Saxons, and the other the Danes, and set forth, both in rude rhymes and with hard blows, the contentions of these two fierce nations, and the amazonian courage of the English women, who, according to the story, were the principal agents in the general massacre of the Danes, which took place at Hocktide, in the year of God 1012. This sport, which had been long a favourite pastime with the men of Coventry, had, it seems, been put down by the influence of some zealous clergyman, of the more precise cast, who chanced to have considerable influence with the magistrates. But the generality of the inhabitants had petitioned the Queen that they might have their play again, and be honoured with permission to represent it before her Highness. And when the matter was canvassed in the little council, which usually attended the Queen for dispatch of business, the proposal, although opposed by some of the stricter sort, found favour in the eyes of Elizabeth, who said that such toys occupied, without offence, the minds of many, who, lacking them, might find worse subjects of pastime ; and that their pastors, however commendable for learning and godliness, were somewhat too sour in preaching against the pastimes of their flocks, and so the pageant was permitted to proceed.

Accordingly, after a morning repast, which Master Laneham calls an ambrosial breakfast, the principal persons of the court, in attendance upon Her Majesty, pressed to the Gallery-tower, to witness the approach of the two contending parties of English and Danes ; and after a signal had been given, the gate which opened in the circuit of the chase was thrown wide, to admit them. On they came, foot and horse ; for some of the more ambitious burghers

and yeomen had put themselves into fantastic dresses, imitating knights, in order to resemble the chivalry of the two different nations. However, to prevent fatal accidents, they were not permitted to appear on real horses, but had only license to accoutre themselves with those hobbyhorses, as they are called, which anciently formed the chief delight of a morrice-dance, and which still are exhibited on the stage, in the grand battle fought at the conclusion of Mr. Bayes's tragedy. The infantry followed in similar disguises. The whole exhibition was to be considered as a sort of anti-masque, or burlesque of the more stately pageants, in which the nobility and gentry bore part in the show, and, to the best of their knowledge, imitated with accuracy the personages whom they represented. The Hocktide play was of a different character, the actors being persons of inferior degree, and their habits the better fitted for the occasion, the more incongruous and ridiculous that they were in themselves. Accordingly their array, which the progress of our tale allows us no time to describe, was ludicrous enough, and their weapons though sufficiently formidable to deal sound blows, were long alder-poles instead of lances, and sound cudgels for swords; and for fence, both cavalry and infantry were well equipped with stout headpieces and targets, both made of thick leather.

These rough rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy, and whose court, governed by a female, whose sense of propriety was equal to her strength of mind, was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement, than her councils for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough masculine spirit, which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain the Queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque of chivalry, which was presented in the Coventry play.

She called near her person the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, partly perhaps to make amends to the former, for the long and private audiences with which she had indulged the Earl of Leicester, by engaging him in conversation upon a pastime, which better suited his taste than those pageants that were furnished forth from the stores of antiquity. The disposition which the Queen showed to laugh and jest with her military leaders gave the Earl of Leicester the opportunity he had been watching for withdrawing from the royal presence, which to the court around, so well had he chosen his time, had the graceful appearance of leaving his rival free access to the Queen's person, instead of availing himself of his right as her landlord, to stand perpetually betwixt others and the light of her countenance.

Leicester's thoughts, however, had a far different object from mere courtesy; for no sooner did he see the Queen fairly engaged in conversation with Sussex and Hunsdon, behind whose back stood Sir Nicholas Blount, grinning from ear to ear at each word which was spoken, than, making a sign to Tressilian, who, according to appointment, watched his motions at a little distance, he extricated himself from the press, and walking towards the chase, made his way through the crowds of ordinary spectators, who, with open mouth, stood gazing on the battle of the English and the Danes. When he had accomplished this, which was a work of some difficulty, he shot another glance behind him to see that Tressilian had been equally successful, and as soon as he saw him also free from the crowd, he led the way to a small thicket, behind which stood a lackey, with two horses ready saddled. He flung himself on the one, and made signs to Tressilian to mount the other, who obeyed without speaking a single word.

Leicester then spurred his horse, and galloped without stopping until he reached a sequestered spot, environed by lofty oaks, about a mile's distance from the castle, and in

an opposite direction from the scene to which curiosity was drawing every spectator. He there dismounted, bound his horse to a tree, and only pronouncing the words, "Here there is no risk of interruption," laid his cloak across his saddle, and drew his sword.

Tressilian imitated his example punctually, yet could not forbear saying, as he drew his weapon, "My lord, as I have been known to many as one who does not fear death, when placed in balance with honour, methinks I may, without derogation, ask, wherefore, in the name of all that is honourable, your lordship has dared to offer me such a mark of disgrace, as places us on these terms with respect to each other?"

"If you like not such marks of my scorn," replied the Earl, "betake yourself instantly to your weapon, lest I repeat the usage you complain of."

"It shall not need, my lord," said Tressilian. "God judge betwixt us! and your blood, if you fall, be on your own head."

He had scarcely completed the sentence, when they instantly closed in combat.

But Leicester, who was a perfect master of defence among all other exterior accomplishments of the time, had already seen enough of Tressilian's strength and skill to make him fight with more caution than heretofore, and prefer a secure revenge to a hasty one. For some minutes they fought with equal skill and fortune, till, in a desperate lunge which Leicester successfully put aside, Tressilian exposed himself at disadvantage; and, in a subsequent attempt to close, the Earl forced his sword from his hand, and stretched him on the ground. With a grim smile he held the point of his rapier within two inches of the throat of his fallen adversary, and placing his foot at the same time upon his breast, bid him confess his villainous wrongs towards him, and prepare for death.

"I have no villainy nor wrong towards thee to confess,"

answered Tressilian, "and am better prepared for death than thou. Use thine advantage as thou wilt, and may God forgive you! I have given you no cause for this."

"No cause!" exclaimed the Earl, "no cause!—but why parley with such a slave?—Die a liar as thou hast lived!"

He had withdrawn his arm for the purpose of striking the fatal blow, when it was suddenly seized from behind.

The Earl turned in wrath to shake off the unexpected obstacle, but was surprised to find that a strange-looking boy had hold of his sword-arm, and clung to it with such tenacity of grasp that he could not shake him off without a considerable struggle, in the course of which Tressilian had opportunity to rise and possess himself once more of his weapon. Leicester again turned towards him with looks of unabated ferocity, and the combat would have recommenced with still more desperation on both sides, had not the boy clung to Lord Leicester's knees, and in a shrill tone implored him to listen one moment ere he prosecuted this quarrel.

"Stand up, and let me go," said Leicester, "or, by Heaven, I will pierce thee with my rapier!—What hast thou to do to bar my way to revenge?"

"Much—much!" exclaimed the undaunted boy; "since my folly has been the cause of these bloody quarrels between you, and perchance of worse evils. Oh, if you would ever again enjoy the peace of an innocent mind, if you hope again to sleep in peace and unhaunted by remorse, take so much leisure as to peruse this letter, and then do as you list."

While he spoke in this eager and earnest manner, to which his singular features and voice gave a goblin-like effect, he held up to Leicester a packet, secured with a long tress of woman's hair, of a beautiful light-brown colour. Enraged as he was, nay, almost blinded with fury to see his destined revenge so strangely frustrated, the Earl of Leicester could not resist this extraordinary supplicant.

He snatched the letter from his hand—changed colour as he looked on the superscription—undid, with faltering hand, the knot which secured it—glanced over the contents, and, staggering back, would have fallen, had he not rested against the trunk of a tree, where he stood for an instant, his eyes bent on the letter, and his sword-point turned to the ground, without seeming to be conscious of the presence of an antagonist, towards whom he had shown little mercy, and who might in turn have taken him at advantage. But for such revenge Tressilian was too noble-minded—he also stood still in surprise, waiting the issue of this strange fit of passion, but holding his weapon ready to defend himself in case of need against some new and sudden attack on the part of Leicester, whom he again suspected to be under the influence of actual frenzy. The boy, indeed, he easily recognised as his old acquaintance Dickon, whose face, once seen, was scarcely to be forgotten; but how he came thither at so critical a moment, why his interference was so energetic, and, above all, how it came to produce so powerful an effect upon Leicester, were questions which he could not solve.

But the letter was of itself powerful enough to work effects yet more wonderful. It was that which the unfortunate Amy had written to her husband, in which she alleged the reasons and manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, informed him of her having made her way to Kenilworth to enjoy his protection, and mentioned the circumstances which had compelled her to take refuge in Tressilian's apartment, earnestly requesting he would, without delay, assign her a more suitable asylum. The letter concluded with the most earnest expressions of devoted attachment, and submission to his will in all things, and particularly respecting her situation and place of residence, conjuring him only that she might not be placed under the guardianship or restraint of Varney.

The letter dropped from Leicester's hand when he had

perused it. "Take my sword," he said, "Tressilian, and pierce my heart, as I would but now have pierced yours!"

"My lord," said Tressilian, "you have done me great wrong; but something within my breast ever whispered that it was by egregious error."

"Error, indeed!" said Leicester, and handed him the letter; "I have been made to believe a man of honour a villain, and the best and purest of creatures a false profligate.—Wretched boy, why comes this letter now, and where has the bearer lingered?"

"I dare not tell you, my lord," said the boy, withdrawing, as if to keep beyond his reach;—"but here comes one who was the messenger."

Wayland at the same moment came up; and, interrogated by Leicester, hastily detailed all the circumstances of his escape with Amy,—the fatal practices which had driven her to flight,—and her anxious desire to throw herself under the instant protection of her husband,—pointing out the evidence of the domestics of Kenilworth, "who could not," he observed, "but remember her eager enquiries after the Earl of Leicester on her first arrival."

"The villains!" exclaimed Leicester; "but oh, that worst of villains, Varney!—and she is even now in his power!"

"But not, I trust in God," said Tressilian, "with any commands of fatal import?"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the Earl hastily. "I said something in madness—but it was recalled, fully recalled, by a hasty messenger; and she is now—she must now be safe."

"Yes," said Tressilian, "she *must* be safe, and I *must* be assured of her safety. My own quarrel with you is ended, my lord; but there is another to begin with the seducer of Amy Robsart, who has screened his guilt under the cloak of the infamous Varney."

"The *seducer* of Amy!" replied Leicester, with a voice

like thunder; "say her husband!—her misguided, blinded, most unworthy husband!—She is as surely Countess of Leicester as I am belted Earl. Nor, can you, sir, point out that manner of justice which I will not render her at my own free will. I need scarce say, I fear not your compulsion."

The generous nature of Tressilian was instantly turned from consideration of anything personal to himself, and centred at once upon Amy's welfare. He had by no means undoubting confidence in the fluctuating resolutions of Leicester, whose mind seemed to him agitated beyond the government of calm reason; neither did he, notwithstanding the assurance he had received, think Amy safe in the hands of his dependents. "My lord," he said calmly, "I mean you no offence, and am far from seeking a quarrel. But my duty to Sir Hugh Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the Queen, that the Countess's rank may be acknowledged in her person."

"You shall not need, sir," replied the Earl haughtily; "do not dare to interfere. No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy.—To Elizabeth herself will I tell it, and then for Cumnor Place with the speed of life and death!"

So saying, he unbound his horse from the tree, threw himself into the saddle, and rode at full gallop towards the castle.

As Tressilian rode along the bridge, lately the scene of so much riotous sport, he could not but observe that men's countenances had singularly changed during the space of his brief absence. The mock fight was over, but the men, still habited in their masquing suits, stood together in groups, like the inhabitants of a city who have been just startled by some strange and alarming news.

Sir Nicholas Blount was the first person of his own particular acquaintance Tressilian saw, who left him no time to make inquiries, but greeted him with, "God help thy heart, Tressilian, thou art fitter for a clown than a courtier—thou

canst not attend, as becomes one who follows her Majesty. —Here you are called for, wished for, waited for—no man but you will serve the turn; and hither you come with a misbegotton brat on thy horse's neck, as if thou wert dry nurse to some suckling devil, and wert just returned from airing."

"Why, what is the matter?" said Tressilian, letting go the boy, who sprang to the ground like a feather, and himself dismounting at the same time.

"Why, no one knows the matter," replied Blount; "I cannot smell it out myself, though I have a nose like other courtiers. Only, my Lord of Leicester has galloped along the bridge, as if he would have rode over all in his passage, demanded an audience of the Queen, and is closeted even now with her, and Burleigh and Walsingham—and you are called for—but whether the matter be treason or worse, no one knows."

"He speaks true, by Heaven!" said Raleigh, who that instant appeared; "you must immediately to the Queen's presence."

"Be not rash, Raleigh," said Blount, "remember his boots.—For Heaven's sake, go to my chamber, dear Tressilian, and don my new bloom-coloured silken hose —I have worn them but twice."

"Pshaw!" answered Tressilian; "do thou take care of this boy, Blount; be kind to him, and look he escapes you not—much depends on him."

So saying, he followed Raleigh hastily, leaving honest Blount with the bridle of his horse in one hand, and the boy in the other.

Tressilian traversed the full length of the great hall, in which the astonished courtiers formed various groups, and were whispering mysteriously together, while all kept their eyes fixed on the door, which led from the upper end of the hall into the Queen's withdrawing apartment. Raleigh pointed to the door—Tressilian knocked, and was instantly

admitted. Many a neck was stretched to gain a view into the interior of the apartment; but the tapestry which covered the door on the inside was dropped too suddenly to admit the slightest gratification of curiosity.

Upon entrance, Tressilian found himself, not without a strong palpitation of heart, in the presence of Elizabeth, who was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal, while two or three of her most sage and confidential counsellors exchanged anxious looks with each other, but delayed speaking till her wrath had abated. Before the empty chair of state in which she had been seated, and which was half pushed aside by the violence with which she had started from it, knelt Leicester, his arms crossed, and his brows bent on the ground, still and motionless as the effigies upon a sepulchre. Beside him stood the Lord Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, holding his baton of office—the Earl's sword was unbuckled, and lay before him on the floor.

"Ho, sir," said the Queen, coming close up to Tressilian, and stamping on the floor with the action and manner of Henry himself; "*you* know of this fair work—*you* are an accomplice in this deception which has been practised on us—*you* have been a main cause of our doing injustice?" Tressilian dropped on his knee before the Queen, his good sense showing him the risk of attempting any defence at that moment of irritation. "Art dumb, sirrah!" she continued; "thou know'st of this affair—dost thou not?"

"Not, gracious madam, that this poor lady was Countess of Leicester."

"Nor shall any one know her for such," said Elizabeth. "Death of my life! Countess of Leicester!—I say Dame Amy Dudley—and well if she have not cause to write herself widow of the traitor Robert Dudley."

"Madam," said Leicester, "do with me what it may be your will to do—but work no injury on this gentleman—he hath in no way deserved it."

"And will he be the better for thy intercession?" said the Queen, leaving Tressilian, who slowly arose, and rushing to Leicester, who continued kneeling,—"the better for *thy* intercession, thou doubly false—thou doubly forsworn?—of thy intercession, whose villainy hath made me ridiculous to my subjects, and odious to myself?—I could tear out mine eyes for their blindness!"

Burleigh here ventured to interpose.

"Madam," he said, "remember that you are a Queen—Queen of England—mother of your people. Give not away to this wild storm of passion."

Elizabeth turned round to him, while a tear actually twinkled in her proud and angry eye. "Burleigh," she said, "thou art a statesman—thou dost not, thou canst not, comprehend half the scorn—half the misery, that man has poured on me!"

With the utmost caution—with the deepest reverence, Burleigh took her hand at the moment he saw her heart was at the fullest, and led her aside to an oriel window, apart from the others.

"Madam," he said, "I am a statesman, but I am also a man—a man already grown old in your councils, who have not and cannot have a wish on earth but your glory and happiness—I pray you to be composed."

"Ah, Burleigh," said Elizabeth, "thou little knowest"—here her tears fell over her cheeks in despite of her.

"I do—I do know, my honoured Sovereign. O beware that you lead not others to guess that which they know not!"

"Ha!" said Elizabeth, pausing as if a new train of thought had suddenly shot across her brain. "Burleigh, thou art right—thou art right—anything but disgrace—anything but a confession of weakness—anything rather than seem the cheated—slighted—'Sdeath! to think on it is distraction!"

"Be but yourself, my Queen," said Burleigh; "and soar far above a weakness which no Englishman will ever believe

his Elizabeth could have entertained, unless the violence of her disappointment carries a sad conviction to his bosom."

"What weakness, my lord?" said Elizabeth, haughtily; "would you too insinuate that the favour in which I held yonder proud traitor derived its source from aught"—but here she could no longer sustain the proud tone which she had assumed, and again softened as she said, "But why should I strive to deceive even thee, my good and wise servant!"

Burleigh stooped to kiss her hand with affection, and—rare in the annals of courts—a tear of true sympathy dropped from the eye of the minister on the hand of his Sovereign.

It is probable that the consciousness of possessing this sympathy aided Elizabeth in supporting her mortification, and suppressing her extreme resentment; but she was still more moved by fear that her passion should betray to the public the affront and the disappointment, which, alike as a woman and a Queen, she was so anxious to conceal. She turned from Burleigh, and sternly paced the hall till her features had recovered their usual dignity, and her mien its wonted stateliness of regular motion.

"Our Sovereign is her noble self once more," whispered Burleigh to Walsingham; "mark what she does, and take heed you thwart her not."

She then approached Leicester, and said, with calmness, "My Lord Shrewsbury, we discharge you of your prisoner. —My Lord of Leicester, rise and take up your sword—a quarter of an hour's restraint, under the custody of our Marshal, my lord, is, we think, no high penance for months of falsehood practised upon us. We will now hear the progress of this affair."—She then seated herself in her chair, and said, "You, Tressilian, step forward, and say what you know."

Tressilian told his story generously, suppressing as much as he could what affected Leicester, and saying nothing of their having actually fought together. It is very probable

that, in doing so, he did the Earl good service; for had the Queen at that instant found anything on account of which she might vent her wrath upon him, without laying open sentiments of which she was ashamed, it might have fared hard with him. She paused when Tressilian had finished his tale.

"We will take that Wayland," she said, "into our own service, and place the boy in our Secretary-office for instruction, that he may in future use discretion towards letters. For you, Tressilian, you did wrong in not communicating the whole truth to us, and your promise not to do so was both imprudent and undutiful. Yet, having given your word to this unhappy lady, it was the part of a man and a gentleman to keep it; and on the whole, we esteem you for the character you have sustained in this matter. My Lord of Leicester, it is now your turn to tell us the truth, an exercise to which you seem of late to have been too much a stranger."

Accordingly, she extorted, by successive questions, the whole history of his first acquaintance with Amy Robsart—their marriage—his jealousy—the causes on which it was founded, and many particulars besides. Leicester's confession, for such it might be called, was wrenched from him piece-meal, yet was upon the whole accurate, excepting that he totally omitted to mention that he had, by implication or otherwise, assented to Varney's designs upon the life of his Countess.

At length, the haughty lord, like a deer that turns to bay, gave intimation that his patience was failing. "Madam," he said, "I have been much to blame—more than even your just resentment has expressed. Yet, madam, let me say, that my guilt, if it be unpardonable, was not unprovoked; and that, if beauty and condescending dignity could seduce the frail heart of a human being, I might plead both, as the causes of my concealing this secret from your Majesty."

The Queen was so much struck by this reply, which Leicester took care should be heard by no one but herself, that she was for the moment silenced, and the Earl had the temerity to pursue his advantage. "Your Grace, who has pardoned so much, will excuse my throwing myself on your royal mercy for those expressions, which were yester-morning accounted but a light offence."

The Queen fixed her eyes on him while she replied, "Now, by Heaven, my lord, thy effrontery passes the bounds of belief, as well as patience! But it shall avail thee nothing.—What, ho! my lords, come all and hear the news—My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband, and England a King. His Lordship is patriarchal in his tastes—one wife at a time was not sufficient, and he designed us the honour of his left hand. Now, is not this too insolent,—that I could not grace him with a few marks of court favour, but he must presume to think my hand and crown at his disposal?—You, however, think better of me; and I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child, whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands. We go to the presence-chamber—My Lord of Leicester, we command your close attendance on us."

All was eager expectation in the hall, and what was the universal astonishment, when the Queen said to those next her, "The revels of Kenilworth are not yet exhausted, my lords and ladies—we are to solemnize the noble owner's marriage."

There was an universal expression of surprise.

"It is true, on our royal word," said the Queen; "he hath kept this a secret even from us, that he might surprise us with it at this very place and time. I see you are dying of curiosity to know the happy bride—It is Amy Robsart, the same who, to make up the May-game yesterday, figured in the pageant as the wife of his servant Varney."

"For God's sake, madam," said the Earl, approaching her with a mixture of humility, vexation, and shame in his

countenance, and speaking so low as to be heard by no one else, "take my head, as you threatened in your anger, and spare me these taunts! Urge not a falling man—tread not on a crushed worm."

"A worm, my lord?" said the Queen, in the same tone; "nay, a snake is the nobler reptile, and the more exact similitude—the frozen snake you wot of, which was warmed in a certain bosom——"

"For your own sake—for mine, madam," said the Earl —"while there is yet some reason left in me——"

"Speak aloud, my lord," said Elizabeth, "and at farther distance, so please you—your breath thaws our ruff. What have you to ask of us?"

"Permission," said the unfortunate Earl, humbly, "to travel to Cumnor Place."

"To fetch home your bride belike?—Why, ay,—that is but right—for, as we have heard, she is indifferently cared for there. But, my lord, you go not in person—we have counted upon passing certain days in this Castle of Kenilworth, and it were slight courtesy to leave us without a landlord during our residence here. Under your favour, we cannot think to incur such disgrace in the eyes of our subjects. Tressilian shall go to Cumnor Place instead of you, and with him some gentleman who hath been sworn of our chamber, lest my Lord of Leicester should be again jealous of his old rival.—Whom wouldst thou have to be in commission with thee, Tressilian?"

Tressilian, with humble deference, suggested the name of Raleigh.

"Why, ay," said the Queen; "so God ha' me, thou hast made a good choice. He is a young knight besides, and to deliver a lady from prison is an appropriate first adventure. —Cumnor Place is little better than a prison, you are to know, my lords and ladies. Besides, there are certain fait-ours there whom we would willingly have in fast keeping. You will furnish them, Master Secretary, with the warrant

necessary to secure the bodies of Richard Varney and the foreign Alasco, dead or alive. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen—bring the lady here in all honour—lose no time, and God be with you!"

They bowed, and left the presence.

In the meantime the Countess had been hurried off by Varney to Cumnor Place. When they arrived, the Countess asked eagerly for Janet, and showed much alarm when informed that she was not to have the attendance of the girl.

"My daughter is dear to me, madam," said Foster, gruffly; "and I desire not that she should get the court-tricks of lying and 'scaping—somewhat too much of that has she learned already, an it please your ladyship."

The Countess, much fatigued and greatly terrified by the circumstances of her journey, made no answer to this insolence, but mildly expressed a wish to retire to her chamber.

"Ay, ay," muttered Foster, "'tis but reasonable; but, under favour, you go not to your gew-gaw toy-house yonder—you will sleep to night in better security."

"I would it were in my grave," said the Countess; "but that mortal feelings shiver at the idea of soul and body parting."

"You, I guess, have no chance to shiver at that," replied Foster. "My lord comes hither to-morrow, and doubtless you will make your own ways good with him."

"But does he come hither?—does he indeed, good Foster?"

"O ay, good Foster!" replied the other. "But what Foster shall I be to-morrow, when you speak of me to my lord—though all I have done was to obey his own orders?"

"You shall be my protector—a rough one, indeed—but still a protector," answered the Countess. "Oh, that Janet were but here!"

"She is better where she is," answered Foster—"one of you is enough to perplex a plain head—but will you taste any refreshment?"

"O no, no—my chamber—my chamber. I trust," she said apprehensively, "I may secure it on the inside?"

"With all my heart," answered Foster, "so I may secure it on the outside;" and taking a light, he led the way to a part of the building where Amy had never been, and conducted her up a stair of great height, preceded by one of the old women with a lamp. At the head of the stair, which seemed of almost immeasurable height, they crossed a short wooden gallery, formed of black oak, and very narrow, at the farther end of which was a strong oaken door which opened and admitted them into a miserable apartment, homely in its accommodations in the very last degree, and, except in name, little different to a prison-room.

Foster stopped at the door, and gave the lamp to the Countess, without either offering or permitting the attendance of the old woman who had carried it. The lady stood not on ceremony, but taking it hastily, barred the door, and secured it with the ample means provided on the inside for that purpose.

Varney, meanwhile, had lurked behind on the stairs, but hearing the door barred, he now came up on tiptoe, and Foster, winking to him, pointed with self-complacence to a piece of concealed machinery in the wall, which, playing with much ease and little noise, dropped a part of the wooden gallery, after the manner of a drawbridge, so as to cut off all communication between the door of the bedroom, which he usually inhabited, and the landing-place of the high winding-stair, which ascended to it. The rope by which this machinery was wrought was generally carried within the bedchamber, it being Foster's object to provide against invasion from without; but now that it was intended to secure the prisoner within, the cord had been brought over to the landing-place, and was there made fast, when

Foster, with much complacency, had dropped the unsuspected trap-door.

Varney looked with great attention at the machinery, and peeped more than once down the abyss which was opened by the fall of the trap-door. It was as dark as pitch, and seemed profoundly deep, going, as Foster informed his confederate in a whisper, nigh to the lowest vault of the castle. Varney cast once more a fixed and long look down into this sable gulf, and then followed Foster to the part of the manor-house most usually inhabited.

When they arrived in the parlour, Varney requested Foster to get them supper, and some of the choicest wine.

"I will seek Alasco," he added; "we have work for him to do, and we must put him in good heart."

Foster groaned at this intimation, but made no remonstrance.

"But," said Varney, "to our graver matter. I will teach thee a spring, Tony, to catch a pewit—yonder trap door—yonder gimcrack of thine, will remain secure in appearance, will it not, though the supports are withdrawn beneath?"

"Ay, marry, will it," said Foster, "so long as it is not trodden on."

"But were the lady to attempt an escape over it," replied Varney, "her weight would carry it down?"

"A mouse's weight would do it," said Foster.

"Why, then, she dies in attempting her escape, and what could you or I help it, honest Tony? Let us to bed, we will adjust our project to-morrow."

On the next day, when evening approached, Varney summoned Foster to the execution of their plan. Foster's old man-servant was sent on a feigned errand down to the village, and Anthony himself, as if anxious to see that the Countess suffered no want of accommodation, visited her place of confinement. He was so much staggered

at the mildness and patience with which she seemed to endure her confinement, that he could not help earnestly recommending her not to cross the threshold of her room on any account whatever, until Lord Leicester should come, "which," he added, "I trust in God, will be very soon." Amy patiently promised that she would resign herself to her fate, and Foster returned to his hardened companion with his conscience half eased of the perilous load that weighed on it. "I have warned her," he said; "surely in vain is the snare set in the sight of any bird!"

He left, therefore, the Countess's door unsecured on the outside, and, under the eye of Varney, withdrew the supports which sustained the falling trap, which, therefore, kept its level position merely by a slight adhesion. They withdrew to wait the issue on the ground-floor adjoining, but they waited long in vain. At length Varney, after walking long to and fro, with his face muffled in his cloak, threw it suddenly back, and exclaimed, "Surely never was a woman fool enough to neglect so fair an opportunity of escape!"

"Perhaps she is resolved," said Foster, "to await her husband's return."

"True!—most true," said Varney, rushing out, "I had not thought of that before."

In less than two minutes, Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the courtyard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the Earl's usual signal;—the instant after the door of the Countess's chamber opened, and in the same moment the trap-door gave way. There was a rushing sound—a heavy fall—a faint groan—and all was over.

At the same instant, Varney called in at the window, in an accent and tone which was an indescribable mixture betwixt horror and raillery, "Is the bird caught?—is the deed done?"

"O God, forgive us!" replied Anthony Foster.

"Why, thou fool," said Varney, "thy toil is ended, and

thy reward secure. Look down into the vault—what seest thou?"

"I see only a heap of white clothes, like a snowdrift," said Foster. "O God, she moves her arm!"

"Hurl something down on her. Thy gold chest, Tony—it is an heavy one."

"Varney, thou art an incarnate fiend!" replied Foster. "There needs nothing more; she is gone!"

"So pass our troubles," said Varney, entering the room. "I dreamed not I could have mimicked the Earl's call so well."

"Oh, if there be judgment in heaven, thou hast deserved it," said Foster, "and wilt meet it! Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections. It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk!"

"Thou art a fanatical ass," replied Varney; "let us now think how the alarm should be given. The body is to remain where it is."

But their wickedness was to be permitted no longer; for, even while they were at this consultation, Tressilian and Raleigh broke in upon them, having obtained admittance by means of Foster's servant, whom they had secured at the village.

Anthony Foster fled on their entrance; and, knowing each corner and pass of the intricate old house, escaped all search. But Varney was taken on the spot; and, instead of expressing compunction for what he had done, seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in pointing out to them the remains of the murdered Countess, while at the same time he defied them to show that he had any share in her death. The despairing grief of Tressilian, on viewing the mangled and yet warm remains of what had lately been so lovely and so beloved, was such, that Raleigh was compelled to have him removed from the place by force, while he himself assumed the direction of what was to be done.

Varney, upon a second examination, made very little

mystery either of the crime or of its motives; alleging, as a reason for his frankness, that though much of what he confessed could only have attached to him by suspicion, yet such suspicion would have been sufficient to deprive him of Leicester's confidence, and to destroy all his towering plans of ambition. "I was not born," he said, "to drag on the remainder of life a degraded outcast; nor will I so die, that my fate shall make a holiday to the vulgar herd."

The news of the Countess's dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse. But as Varney in his last declaration had been studious to spare the character of his patron, the Earl was the object rather of compassion than resentment. The Queen at length recalled him to court; he was once more distinguished as a statesman and favourite, and the rest of his career is well known to history. But there was something retributive in his death, if, according to an account very generally received, it took place from his swallowing a draught of poison, which was designed by him for another person.

—Sir Walter Scott, *Kenilworth.*

XIX

The King and his Jeweller

MASTER GEORGE HERIOT, citizen of London, was bound to Whitehall in order to exhibit a piece of valuable workmanship to King James, which he deemed his Majesty might be pleased to view, or even to purchase. He himself was therefore mounted upon his caparisoned mule, that he might the better make his way through the narrow, dirty, and crowded streets; and while one of his attendants carried under his arm the piece of plate, wrapped up in red baize, the other two gave an eye to its safety; for such was the state of the police of the metropolis, that men were often assaulted in the public street for the sake of revenge or of plunder; and those who apprehended being beset, usually endeavoured, if their estate admitted such expense, to secure themselves by the attendance of armed followers. And this custom, which was at first limited to the nobility and gentry, extended by degrees to those citizens of consideration, who, being understood to travel with a charge, as it was called, might otherwise have been selected as safe subjects of plunder by the street-robber.

As Master George Heriot paced forth westward with this gallant attendance, he paused at the shop door of his countryman and friend, the ancient horologer, and having caused Tunstall, who was in attendance in the shop, to adjust his watch by the real time, he desired to speak with his master; in consequence of which summons, the old Time-meter came forth from his den, his face like a bronze bust,

darkened with dust, and glistening here and there with copper filings, and his senses so bemused in the intensity of calculation, that he gazed on his friend the goldsmith for a minute before he seemed perfectly to comprehend who he was, and heard him express his invitation to David Ramsay, and pretty Mistress Margaret, his daughter, to dine with him next day at noon, to meet with a noble young countryman, without returning any answer.

"I'll make thee speak, with a murrain to thee," muttered Heriot to himself; and suddenly changing his tone, he said aloud,—"I pray you, neighbour David, when are you and I to have a settlement for the bullion wherewith I supplied you to mount yonder hall-clock at Theobald's, and that other whirligig that you made for the Duke of Buckingham? I have had the Spanish house to satisfy for the ingots, and I must needs put you in mind that you have been eight months behind hand."

There is something so sharp and *aigre* in the demand of a peremptory dun, that no human tympanum, however inaccessible to other tones, can resist the application. David Ramsay started at once from his reverie, and answered in a pettish tone, "Wow, George, man, what needs aw this din about sax score o' pounds? Aw the world kens I can answer aw claims on me, and you proffered yourself fair time, till his maist gracious Majesty and the noble Duke suld make settled accompts wi' me; and ye may ken, by your ain experience, that I canna gang rowting like an unmannered Highland stot to their doors, as ye come to mine."

Heriot laughed, and replied, "Well, David, I see a demand of money is like a bucket of water about your ears, and makes you a man of the world at once. And now, friend, will you tell me, like a Christian man, if you will dine with me to-morrow at noon, and bring pretty Mistress Margaret, my god-daughter, with you, to meet with our noble young countryman, the Lord of Glenvarloch?"

"The young Lord of Glenvarloch!" said the old mechanist; "wi' aw my heart, and blithe I will be to see him."

"God be wi' you, Davie," said the citizen. "Forget not to-morrow at noon." And, so saying, he turned his mule's head westward, and crossed Temple Bar, at that slow and decent amble, which at once became his rank and civic importance, and put his pedestrian followers to no inconvenience to keep up with him.

At the Temple gate he again paused, dismounted, and sought his way into one of the small booths occupied by scriveners in the neighbourhood. A young man with lank smooth hair combed straight to his ears, and then cropped short, rose, with a cringing reverence, pulled off a slouched hat, which he would upon no signal replace on his head, and answered, with much demonstration of reverence, to the goldsmith's question of, "How goes business, Andrew?" —"Aw the better for your worship's kind countenance and maintenance."

"Get a large sheet of paper, man, and make a new pen, with a sharp neb, and fine hair-stroke. Do not slit the quill up too high, it's a wastrife course in your trade, Andrew—they that do not mind corn-pickles, never comes to forpits. I have known a learned man write a thousand pages with one quill."

"Ah! sir," said the lad, who listened to the goldsmith, though instructing him in his own trade, with an air of veneration and acquiesence, "how sune ony puir creature like mysell may rise in the world, wi' the instruction of such a man as your worship!"

"My instructions are few, Andrew, soon told, and not hard to practise. Be honest—be industrious—be frugal—and you will soon win wealth and worship.—Here, copy me this Supplication in your best and most formal hand. I will wait by you till it is done."

The youth lifted not his eye from the paper, and laid not the pen from his hand, until the task was finished to his

employer's satisfaction. The citizen then gave the young scrivener an angel; and bidding him, on his life, be secret in all business intrusted to him, again mounted his mule, and rode on westward along the Strand.

It may be worth while to remind our readers that the Temple-Bar which Heriot passed, was not the arched screen, or gateway, of the present day; but an open railing, or palisade, which, at night, and in times of alarm, was closed with a barricade of posts and chains. The Strand also, along which he rode, was not, as now, a continued street, although it was beginning already to assume that character. It still might be considered as an open road, along the south side of which stood various houses and hotels belonging to the nobility, having gardens behind them down to the water-side, with stairs to the river, for the convenience of taking boat; which mansions have bequeathed the names of their lordly owners to many of the streets leading from the Strand to the Thames. The north side of the Strand was also a long line of houses, behind which, as in Saint Martin's Lane, and other points, buildings were rapidly arising; but Covent Garden was still a garden, in the literal sense of the word, or at least but beginning to be studded with irregular buildings. All that was passing around, however, marked the rapid increase of a capital which had long enjoyed peace, wealth, and a regular government. Houses were rising in every direction; and the shrewd eye of our citizen already saw the period not distant, which should convert the nearly open highway on which he travelled into a connected and regular street, uniting the court and the town with the city of London.

He next passed Charing Cross, which was no longer the pleasant solitary village at which the judges were wont to breakfast on their way to Westminster Hall, but began to resemble the artery through which, to use Johnson's expression, "pours the full tide of London population." The

buildings were rapidly increasing, yet scarcely gave even a faint idea of its present appearance.

At last Whitehall received our traveller, who passed under one of the beautiful gates designed by Holbein, and composed of tesselated brick-work, being the same to which Moniplies had profanely likened the West-port of Edinburgh, and entered the ample precincts of the palace of Whitehall, now full of all the confusion attending improvement.

It was just at the time when James, little suspecting that he was employed in constructing a palace, from the window of which his only son was to pass in order that he might die upon a scaffold before it,—was busied in removing the ancient and ruinous buildings of De Burgh, Henry VIII., and Queen Elizabeth, to make way for the superb architecture on which Inigo Jones exerted all his genius. The King, ignorant of futurity, was now engaged in pressing on his work; and, for that purpose, still maintained his royal apartments at Whitehall, amidst the rubbish of old buildings, and the various confusion attending the erection of the new pile, which formed at present a labyrinth not easily traversed.

The goldsmith to the Royal Household, and who, if fame spoke true, oftentimes acted as their banker,—for these professions were not as yet separated from each other,—was a person of too much importance to receive the slightest interruption from sentinel or porter; and, leaving his mule and two of his followers in the outer court, he gently knocked at a postern-gate of the building, and was presently admitted, while the most trusty of his attendants followed him closely, with the piece of plate under his arm. This man also he left behind him in an ante-room,—where three or four pages in the royal livery, but untrussed, unbuttoned, and dressed more carelessly than the place, and nearness to a King's person, seemed to admit, were playing at dice and draughts, or stretched upon

benches, and slumbering with half-shut eyes. A corresponding gallery, which opened from the ante-room, was occupied by two gentlemen-ushers of the chamber, who gave each a smile of recognition as the wealthy goldsmith entered.

No word was spoken on either side; but one of the ushers looked first to Heriot and then to a little door half-covered by the tapestry, which seemed to say, as plain as a look could, "Lies your business that way?" The citizen nodded; and the court-attendant, moving on tiptoe, and with as much caution as if the floor had been paved with eggs, advanced to the door, opened it gently, and spoke a few words in a low tone. The broad Scottish accent of King James was heard in reply,—"Admit him instanter, Maxwell. Have you hairboured sae lang at the Court, and not learned that gold and silver are ever welcome?"

The usher signed to Heriot to advance, and the honest citizen was presently introduced into the cabinet of the Sovereign.

The scene of confusion amid which he found the King seated, was no bad picture of the state and quality of James's own mind. There was much that was rich and costly in cabinet pictures and valuable ornaments; but they were arranged in a slovenly manner, covered with dust, and lost half their value, or at least their effect, from the manner in which they were presented to the eye. The table was loaded with huge folios, amongst which lay light books of jest and ribaldry; and, amongst notes of unmercifully long orations, and essays on king-craft, were mingled miserable roundels and ballads by the Royal 'Prentice, as he styled himself, in the art of poetry, and schemes for the general pacification of Europe, with a list of the names of the King's hounds, and remedies against canine madness.

The King's dress was of green velvet, quilted so full as to be dagger-proof—which gave him the appearance of clumsy and ungainly protuberance; while its being buttoned

awry, communicated to his figure an air of distortion. Over his green doublet he wore a sad-coloured night-gown, out of the pocket of which peeped his hunting-horn. His high-crowned grey hat lay on the floor, covered with dust, but encircled by a carcanet of large balas rubies; and he wore a blue velvet nightcap, in the front of which was placed a plume of a heron, which had been struck down by a favourite hawk in some critical moment of the flight, in remembrance of which the King wore this highly honoured feather.

The monarch, who saluted Heriot by the name of Jingling Geordie (for it was his well-known custom to give nicknames to all those with whom he was on terms of familiarity), enquired what new clatter-traps he had brought with him, to cheat his lawful and native Prince out of his siller.

"God forbid, my liege," said the citizen, "that I should have any such disloyal purpose. I did but bring a piece of plate to show to your most gracious Majesty, which, both for the subject and for the workmanship, I were loath to put into the hands of any subject until I knew your Majesty's pleasure anent it."

"Body o' me, man, let's see it, Heriot; though, by my saul, Steenie's service o' plate was sae dear a bargain, I had 'maist pawned my word as a Royal King to keep my ain gold and silver in future, and let you, Geordie, keep yours."

"Respecting the Duke of Buckingham's plate," said the goldsmith, "your Majesty was pleased to direct that no expense should be spared, and——"

"What signifies what I desired, man? when a wise man is with fules and bairns, he maun e'en play at the chucks. But you should have had mair sense and consideration than to gie Babie Charles and Steenie their ain gate, they wad hae floored the very rooms wi' silver, and I wonder they didna."

George Heriot bowed, and said no more. He knew his master too well to vindicate himself otherwise than by a distant allusion to his order; and James, with whom economy was only a transient and momentary twinge of conscience, became immediately afterwards desirous to see the piece of plate which the goldsmith proposed to exhibit, and dispatched Maxwell to bring it to his presence. In the meantime he demanded of the citizen whence he had procured it.

"From Italy, may it please your Majesty," replied Heriot.

"It has naething in it tending to papestrie?" said the King, looking graver than his wont.

"Surely not, please your Majesty," said Heriot; "I were not wise to bring any thing to your presence that had the mark of the beast."

"You would be the mair beast yourself to do so," said the King; "it is weel kend that I wrestled wi' Dagon in my youth, and smote him on the ground-sill of his own temple; a gude evidence that I should be in time called, however unworthy, the Defender of the Faith.—But here comes Maxwell, bending under his burden, like the Golden Ass of Apuleius."

Heriot hastened to relieve the usher, and to place the embossed salver, for such it was, and of extraordinary dimensions, in a light favourable for his Majesty's viewing the sculpture.

"Saul of my body, man," said the King, "it is a curious piece, and, as I think, fit for a King's chalmer; and the subject, as you say, Master George, vera adequate and beseeming—being, as I see, the judgment of Solomon—a prince in whose paths it weel becomes a' leeving monarchs to walk with emulation."

"But whose footsteps," said Maxwell, "only one of them —if a subject may say so much—hath ever overtaken."

"Haud your tongue for a fause fleeching loon!" said

"It's a curious and vera artificial sculpture," said the king.

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the King, but with a smile on his face that showed the flattery had done its part. "Look at the bonny piece of workmanship, and haud your clavering tongue.—And whase handiwork may it be, Geordie?"

"It was wrought, sir," replied the goldsmith, "by the famous Florentine, Benvenuto Cellini, and designed for Francis the First of France; but I hope it will find a fitter master."

"Francis of France!" said the King; "send Solomon, King of the Jews, to Francis of France!—Body of me, man, it would have kythed Cellini mad, had he never done ony thing else out of the gate. Francis!—why, he was a fighting fule, man,—a mere fighting fule,—got himsell ta'en at Pavia, like our ain David at Durham lang syne;—if they could hae sent him Solomon's wit, and love of peace, and godliness, they wad hae dune him a better turn. But Solomon should sit in other gate company than Francis of France."

"I trust that such will be his good fortune," said Heriot.

"It is a curious and vera artificial sculpture," said the King, in continuation; "but yet, methinks, the carnifex, or executioner there, is brandishing his gulley ower near the King's face, seeing he is within reach of his weapon. I think less wisdom than Solomon's wad have taught him that there was danger in edge-tools, and that he wad have bidden the smaik either sheath his shabble, or stand farther back."

George Heriot endeavoured to alleviate this objection by assuring the King that the vicinity betwixt Solomon and the executioner was nearer in appearance than in reality, and that the perspective should be allowed for.

"Gang to the deil wi' your prospective, man," said the King; "there canna be a waur prospective for a lawful king, wha wishes to reign in luve, and die in peace and honour, than to have naked swords flashing in his een. I am accounted as brave as maist folks; and yet I profess to

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ye I could never look on a bare blade without blinking and winking. But a'thegither it is a brave piece;—and what is the price of it, man?"

The goldsmith replied by observing, that it was not his own property, but that of a distressed countryman.

"Whilk you mean to mak your excuse for asking the double of its worth, I warrant?" answered the King. "I ken the tricks of you burrows-town merchants, man."

"I have no hopes of baffling your Majesty's sagacity," said Heriot; "the piece is really what I say, and the price a hundred and fifty pounds sterling, if it pleases your Majesty to make present payment."

"A hundred and fifty punds, man! and as mony witches and warlocks to raise them!" said the irritated Monarch. "My saul, Jingling Geordie, ye are minded that your purse shall jingle to a bonny tune!—How am I to tell you down a hundred and fifty punds for what will not weigh as many merks? and ye ken that my very household servitors, and the officers of my mouth, are sax months in arrear!"

The goldsmith stood his ground against all this objurgation, being what he was well accustomed to, and only answered, that, if his Majesty liked the piece, and desired to possess it, the price could be easily settled. It was true that the party required the money, but he, George Heriot, would advance it on his Majesty's account, if such were his pleasure, and wait his royal conveniency for payment, for that and other matters; the money, meanwhile, lying at the ordinary usage.

"By my honour," said James, "and that is speaking like an honest and reasonable tradesman. We maun get another subsidy frae the Commons, and that will make ae compting of it. Awa wi' it, Maxwell—awa wi' it, and let it be set where Steenie and Babie Charles shall see it as they return from Richmond.—And now that we are secret, my good auld friend Geordie, I do truly opine, that speaking of Solomon and ourselves, the haill wisdom in the country

left Scotland, when we took our travels to the Southland here."

George Heriot was courtier enough to say, that "the wise naturally follow the wisest, as stags follow their leader."

"Troth, I think there is something in what thou sayest," said James; "for we ourselves, and those of our court and household, as thou thyself, for example, are allowed by the English, for as self-opinioned as they are, to pass for reasonable good wits; but the brains of those we have left behind are all astir, and run clean hirdie-girdie, like sae mony warlocks and witches on the Devil's Sabbath-e'en."

"I am sorry to hear this, my liege," said Heriot. "May it please your Grace to say what our countrymen have done to deserve such a character?"

"They are become frantic, man—clean brain-crazed," answered the King. "I cannot keep them out of the Court by all the proclamations that the heralds roar themselves hoarse with. Yesterday, nae farther gane, just as we were mounted, and about to ride forth, in rushed a thorough Edinburgh gutterblood—a ragged rascal, every dud upon whose back was bidding good-day to the other, with a coat and hat that would have served a pease-bogle, and, without havings or reverence, thrusts into our hands, like a sturdy beggar, some Supplication about debts owing by our gracious mother, and siclike trash; whereat the horse spangs on end, and, but for our admirable sitting, wherein we have been thought to excel maist sovereign princes, as well as subjects, in Europe, I promise you we would have been laid endlang on the causeway."

"Your Majesty," said Heriot, "is their common father, and therefore they are the bolder to press into your gracious presence."

"I ken I am *pater patriæ* well enough," said James; "but one would think they had a mind to squeeze my puddings out, that they may divide the inheritance. Ud's death, Geordie, there is not a loon among them can de-

liver a Supplication, as it suld be done in the face of majesty."

"I would I knew the most fitting and beseeming mode to do so," said Heriot, "were it but to instruct our poor countrymen in better fashions."

"By my halidome," said the King, "ye are a ceevileezed fellow, Geordie, and I carena if I fling awa as much time as may teach ye. And, first, see you, sir—ye shall approach the presence of majesty thus,—shadowing your eyes with your hand, to testify that you are in the presence of the Vicegerent of Heaven.—Vera weel, George, that is done in a comely manner.—Then, sir, ye sall kneel, and make as if ye would kiss the hem of our garment, the latch of our shoe, or such like.—Vera weel enacted—whilk we, as being willing to be debonair and pleasing towards our lieges, prevent thus,—and motion to you to rise ;—whilk, having a boon to ask, as yet you obey not, but, gliding your hand into your pouch, bring forth your Supplication, and place it reverentially in our open palm." The goldsmith, who had complied with great accuracy with all the prescribed points of the ceremonial, here completed it, to James's no small astonishment, by placing in his hand the petition of the Lord of Glenvarloch. "What means this, ye fause loon?" said he, reddening and sputtering, "hae I been teaching you the manual exercise, that ye suld present your piece at our ain royal body?—Now, by this light, I had as lief that ye had bended a real pistolet against me, and yet this hae ye done in my very cabinet, where nought suld enter but at my ain pleasure."

"I trust your Majesty," said Heriot, as he continued to kneel, "will forgive my exercising the lesson you condescended to give me in the behalf of a friend?"

"Of a friend!" said the King; "so much the waur—so much the waur, I tell you. If it had been something to do *yoursell* good there would have been some sense in it, and some chance that you wad not have come back on me

in a hurry; but a man may have a hundred friends, and petitions for every ane of them, ilk ane after other."

"Your Majesty, I trust," said Heriot, "will judge me by former experience, and will not suspect me of such presumption."

"I kenna," said the placable monarch; "the world goes daft, I think—*sed semel insanivimus omnes*—thou art my old and faithful servant, that is the truth; and, were't anything for thy own behoof, man, thou shouldst not ask twice. But, troth, Steenie loves me so dearly, that he cares not that any one should ask favours of me but himself. Maxwell (for the usher had re-entered after having carried off the plate), get into the ante-chamber wi' your lang lugs. In conscience, Geordie, I think as that thou hast been mine ain auld fiduciary, and wert my goldsmith when I might say with the Ethnic poet—*Non meâ renidet in domo lacunar*—for, faith, they had pillaged my mither's auld house sae, that beechen bickers, and treen trenchers, and latten platters, were whiles the best at our board, and glad we were of something to put on them, without quarrelling with the metal of the dishes. D'ye mind, for thou wert in maist of our complots, how we were fain to send sax of the Blue-banders to harry the Lady of Loganhouse's dowcot and poultry-yard, and what an awfu' plaint the poor dame made against Jock of Milch, and the thieves of Annandale, wha were as sackless of the deed as I am of the sin of murder?"

"It was the better for Jock," said Heriot; "for, if I remember weel, it saved him from a strapping up at Dumfries, which he had weel deserved for other misdeeds."

"Ay, man, mind ye that?" said the King; "but he had other virtues, for he was a tight huntsman, moveover, that Jock of Milch, and could hollow to a hound till all the woods rang again. But he came to an Annandale end at the last, for Lord Torthorwald run his lance out through him. Cocksnails, man, when I think of these wild passages,

in my conscience, I am not sure but we lived merrier in auld Holyrood in those shifting days, than now when we are dwelling at heck and manger. *Cantabit vacuus*—we had but little to care for."

"And if your Majesty please to remember," said the goldsmith, "the awful task we had to gather silver-vessail and gold-work enough to make some show before the Spanish Ambassador."

"Vera true," said the King, now in a full tide of gossip, "and I mind not the name of the right leal lord that helped us with every unce he had in his house, that his native Prince might have some credit in the eyes of them that had the Indies at their beck."

"I think, if your Majesty," said the citizen, "will cast your eye on the paper in your hand, you will recollect his name."

"Ay!" said the King, "say ye sae, man? Lord Glenvarloch, that was his name indeed—*Justus et tenax propositi*—A just man, but as obstinate as a baited bull. He stood whiles against us, that Lord Randal Olifaunt of Glenvarloch; but he was a loving and a leal subject in the main. But this supplicator maun be his son—Randal has been long gone where king and lord must go, Geordie, as weel as the like of you—and what does his son want with us?"

"The settlement," answered the citizen, "of a large debt due by your Majesty's treasury, for money advanced to your Majesty in great state emergency, about the time of the Raid of Ruthven."

"I mind the thing weel," said King James—"Od's death, man, I was just out of the clutches of the Master of Glamis and his complices, and there was never siller mair welcome to a born Prince,—the mair the shame and pity that crowned King should need sic a petty sum. But what need he dun us for it, man, like a baxter at the breaking? We aught him the siller, and will pay him wi' our con-

venience, or make it otherwise up to him, whilk is enow between prince and subject. We are not *in meditatione fugæ*, man, to be arrested thus peremptorily."

"Alas! an it please your Majesty," said the goldsmith, shaking his head; "it is the poor young nobleman's extreme necessity, and not his will, that makes him importunate; for he must have money, and that briefly, to discharge a debt due to Peregrine Peterson, Conservator of the Privileges at Campvere, or his haill hereditary barony and estate of Glenvarloch will be evicted in virtue of an unredeemed wadset."

"How say ye, man—how say ye?" exclaimed the King, impatiently; "the carle of a Conservator, the son of a Low-Dutch skipper, evict the auld estate and lordship of the house of Olifaunt? God's bread, man, that maun not be—we maun suspend the diligence by writ of favour, or otherwise."

"I doubt that may hardly be," answered the citizen, "if it please your Majesty; your learned counsel in the law of Scotland advise that there is no remeid but in paying the money."

"Ud's fish," said the King, "let him keep haud by the strong hand against the carle, until we can take some order about his affairs."

"Alas!" insisted the goldsmith, "if it like your Majesty, your own pacific government, and your doing of equal justice to all men, has made main force a kittle line to walk by, unless just within the bounds of the Highlands."

"Weel—weel—weel, man," said the perplexed monarch, whose ideas of justice, expedience, and convenience became on such occasions strangely embroiled; "just it is we should pay our debts, that the young man may pay his; and he must be paid, and *in verbo regis* he shall be paid—but how to come by the siller, man, is a difficult chapter—ye maun try the city, Geordie."

"To say the truth," answered Heriot, "please your

gracious Majesty, what betwixt loans and benevolences, and subsidies, the city is at this present——"

"Donna tell me of what the city is," said King James; "our Exchequer is as dry as Dean Giles's discourses on the penitentiary psalms—*Ex nihilo nihil fit*—It's ill taking the breeks aff a wild Highlandman—they that come to me for siller, should tell me how to come by it—the city ye maun try Heriot; and donna think to be called Jingling Geordie for nothing—and *in verbo regis* I will pay the lad if you get me the loan—I wonnot haggle on the terms; and, between you and me, Geordie, we will redeem the brave auld estate of Glenvarloch. But wherefore comes not the young lord to Court, Heriot—is he comely—is he presentable in the presence?"

"No one can be more so," said George Heriot; "but——"

"Ay, I understand ye," said his Majesty—"I understand ye—*Res augusta domi*—puir lad—puir lad!—and his father a right true leal Scots heart, though stiff in some opinions. Hark ye, Heriot, let the lad have twa hundred pounds to fit him out. And, here—here"—(taking the carcanet of rubies from his old hat)—"ye have had these in pledge before for a larger sum, ye auld Levite that ye are. Keep them in gage, till I gie ye back the siller out of the next subsidy."

"If it please your Majesty to give me such directions in writing," said the cautious citizen.

"The deil is in your nicety, George," said the King; "ye are as preceese as a Puritan in form, and a mere Nullifidian in the marrow of the matter. May not a King's word serve ye for advancing your pitiful twa hundred pounds?"

"But not for detaining the crown jewels," said George Heriot.

And the King, who from long experience was inured to dealing with suspicious creditors, wrote an order upon

George Heriot, his well-beloved goldsmith and jeweller, for the sum of two hundred pounds, to be paid presently to Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch, to be imputed as so much debt due to him by the crown; and authorizing the retention of a carcanet of balas rubies, with a great diamond, as described in a Catalogue of his Majesty's Jewels, to remain in possession of the said George Heriot, advancer of the said sum, and so forth, until he was lawfully contented and paid thereof. By another rescript, his Majesty gave the said George Heriot directions to deal with some of the moneyed men, upon equitable terms, for a sum of money for his Majesty's present use, not to be under 50,000 merks, but as much more as could conveniently be procured.

"And has he ony lair, this Lord Nigel of ours?" said the King.

George Heriot could not exactly answer this question; but believed "the young lord had studied abroad."

"He shall have our own advice," said the King, "how to carry on his studies to maist advantage; and it may be we will have him come to Court, and study with Steenie, and Babie Charles. And, now we think on't, away—away, George—for the bairns will be coming hame presently, and we would not as yet they kend of this matter we have been treating anent. *Propera pedem*, O Geordie. Clap your mule between your houghs, and god-den with you."

Thus ended the conference betwixt the gentle King Jamie and his benevolent jeweller and goldsmith.

—Sir Walter Scott, *Fortunes of Nigel.*

XX

The Battle of Edgehill

ON the 10th of October the King's army was in full march, his Majesty generalissimo, the Earl of Lindsey general, of the foot; Prince Rupert, general of the horse; and the first action in the field was by Prince Rupert and Sir John Byron. Sir John had brought his body of 500 horse from Oxford to Worcester; the Lord Say, with a strong party, being in the neighbourhood of Oxford, and expected in the town, Colonel Sandys, a hot man, and who had more courage than judgment, advances with about 1,500 horse and dragoons, with design to beat Sir John Byron out of Worcester, and take post there for the Parliament.

The King had notice that the Earl of Essex designed for Worcester, and Prince Rupert was ordered to advance with a body of horse and dragoons to face the enemy, and bring off Sir John Byron. This his Majesty did to amuse the Earl of Essex, that he might expect him that way; whereas the King's design was to get between the Earl of Essex's army and the city of London; and his Majesty's end was doubly answered, for he not only drew Essex on to Worcester, where he spent more time than he needed, but he beat the party into the bargain.

I went volunteer in this party, and rode in my father's regiment; for though we really expected not to see the enemy, yet I was tired with lying still. We came to Wor-

cester just as notice was brought to Sir John Byron, that a party of the enemy was on their march for Worcester, upon which the Prince, immediately consulting what was to be done, resolves to march the next morning and fight them.

The enemy, who lay at Pershore, about eight miles from Worcester, and, as I believe, had no notice of our march, came on very confidently in the morning, and found us fairly drawn up to receive them. I must confess this was the bluntest, downright way of making war that ever was seen. The enemy, who, in all the little knowledge I had of war, ought to have discovered our numbers, and guessed by our posture what our design was, might easily have informed themselves that we intended to attack them, and so might have secured the advantage of a bridge in their front; but without any regard to these methods of policy, they came on at all hazards. Upon this notice, my father proposed to the Prince to halt for them, and suffer ourselves to be attacked, since we found them willing to give us the advantage. The Prince approved of the advice, so we halted within view of a bridge, leaving space enough on our front for about half the number of their forces to pass and draw up; and at the bridge was posted about fifty dragoons, with orders to retire as soon as the enemy advanced, as if they had been afraid. On the right of the road was a ditch, and a very high bank behind, where we had placed 300 dragoons, with orders to lie flat on their faces till the enemy had passed the bridge, and to let fly among them as soon as our trumpets sounded a charge. Nobody but Colonel Sandys would have been caught in such a snare, for he might easily have seen that when he was over the bridge there was not room enough for him to fight in. But the Lord of hosts was so much in their mouths—for that was the word for that day—that they took little heed how to conduct the host of the Lord to their own advantage.

As we expected, they appeared, beat our dragoons from the bridge, and passed it. We stood firm in one line with

a reserve, and expected a charge, but Colonel Sandys, showing a great deal more judgment than we thought he was master of, extends himself to the left, finding the ground too strait, and began to form his men with a great deal of readiness and skill, for by this time he saw our number was greater than he expected. The Prince perceiving it, and foreseeing that the stratagem of the dragoons would be frustrated by this, immediately charges with the horse, and the dragoons at the same time standing upon their feet, poured in their shot upon those that were passing the bridge. This surprise put them into such disorder, that we had but little work with them. For though Colonel Sandys, with the troops next him, sustained the shock very well, and behaved themselves gallantly enough, yet the confusion beginning in their rear, those that had not yet passed the bridge were kept back by the fire of the dragoons, and the rest were easily cut in pieces. Colonel Sandys was mortally wounded and taken prisoner, and the crowd was so great to get back, that many pushed into the water, and were rather smothered than drowned. Some of them who never came into the fight, were so frighted, that they never looked behind them till they came to Pershore, and, as we were afterwards informed, the lifeguards of the General who had quartered in the town, left it in disorder enough, expecting us at the heels of their men.

If our business had been to keep the Parliament army from coming to Worcester, we had a very good opportunity to have secured the bridge at Pershore; but our design lay another way, as I have said, and the King was for drawing Essex on to the Severn, in hopes to get behind him, which fell out accordingly.

Essex, spurred by this affront in the infancy of their affairs, advances the next day, and came to Pershore time enough to be at the funeral of some of his men; and from thence he advances to Worcester.

We marched back to Worcester, extremely pleased with

the good success of our first attack, and our men were so flushed with this little victory that it put vigour into the whole army. The enemy lost about 3,000 men, and we carried away near 150 prisoners, with 500 horses, some standards and arms, and among the prisoners their colonel; but he died a little after of his wounds.

Upon the approach of the enemy, Worcester was quitted, and the forces marched back to join the King's army, which lay then at Bridgnorth, Ludlow, and thereabout. As the King expected, it fell out; Essex found so much work at Worcester to settle Parliament quarters, and secure Bristol, Gloucester, and Hereford, that it gave the King a full day's march of him. So the King, having the start of him, moves towards London; and Essex, nettled to be both beaten in fight and outdone in conduct, decamps, and follows the King.

The Parliament, and the Londoners too, were in a strange consternation at this mistake of their General; and had the King, whose great misfortune was always to follow precipitant advices,—had the King, I say, pushed on his first design, which he had formed with very good reason, and for which he had been dodging with Essex eight or ten days, viz., of marching directly to London, where he had a very great interest, and where his friends were not yet oppressed and impoverished, as they were afterwards, he had turned the scale of his affairs. And every man expected it; for the members began to shift for themselves, expresses were sent on the heels of one another to the Earl of Essex to hasten after the King, and, if possible, to bring him to a battle. Some of these letters fell into our hands, and we might easily discover that the Parliament were in the last confusion at the thoughts of our coming to London. Besides this, the city was in a worse fright than the House, and the great moving men began to go out of town. In short, they expected us, and we expected to come, but Providence for our ruin had otherwise determined it.

Essex, upon news of the King's march, and upon receipt of the Parliament's letters, makes long marches after us, and on the 23rd of October reaches the village of Kineton, in Warwickshire. The King was almost as far as Banbury, and there calls a council of war. Some of the old officers that foresaw the advantage the King had, the concern the city was in, and the vast addition, both to the reputation of his forces and the increase of his interest, it would be if the King could gain that point, urged the King to march on to London. Prince Rupert and the fresh colonels pressed for fighting, told the King it dispirited their men to march with the enemy at their heels; that the Parliament army was inferior to him by 6,000 men, and fatigued with hasty marching; that as their orders were to fight, he had nothing to do but to post himself to advantage, and receive them to their destruction; that the action near Worcester had let them know how easy it was to deal with a rash enemy; and that 'twas a dishonour for him, whose forces were so much superior, to be pursued by his subjects in rebellion. These and the like arguments prevailed with the King to alter his wiser measures and resolve to fight. Nor was this all; when a resolution of fighting was taken, that part of the advice which they who were for fighting gave, as a reason for their opinion, was forgot, and instead of halting and posting ourselves to advantage till the enemy came up, we were ordered to march back and meet them.

Nay, so eager was the Prince for fighting, that when, from the top of Edgehill, the enemy's army was descried in the bottom between them and the village of Kineton, and that the enemy had bid us defiance, by discharging three cannons, we accepted the challenge, and answering with two shots from our army, we must needs forsake the advantages of the hills, which they must have mounted under the command of our cannon, and march down to them into the plain. I confess, I thought here was a great deal more gallantry than discretion; for it was plainly taking

an advantage out of our own hands, and putting it into the hands of the enemy. An enemy that must fight may always be fought with to advantage.

'Tis true we were all but young in the war; the soldiers hot and forward, and eagerly desired to come to hands with the enemy. But I take the more notice of it here because the King in this acted against his own measures; for it was the King himself had laid the design of getting the start of Essex, and marching to London. His friends had invited him thither, and expected him, and suffered deeply for the omission; and yet he gave way to these hasty counsels, and suffered his judgment to be overruled by majority of voices; an error the King of Sweden was never guilty of. For if all the officers at a council of war were of a different opinion, yet unless their reasons mastered his judgment, their votes never altered his measures. But this was the error of our good, but unfortunate master, three times in this war, and particularly in two of the greatest battles of the time, viz., this of Edgehill, and that of Naseby.

The resolution for fighting being published in the army, gave an universal joy to the soldiers, who expressed an extraordinary ardour for fighting. I remember my father talking with me about it, asked me what I thought of the approaching battle. I told him I thought the King had done very well; for at that time I did not consult the extent of the design, and had a mighty mind, like other rash people, to see it brought to a day, which made me answer my father as I did.

"But," said I, "sir, I doubt there will be but indifferent doings on both sides, between two armies both made up of fresh men that have never seen any service."

My father minded little what I spoke of that; but when I seemed pleased that the King had resolved to fight, he looked angrily at me, and told me he was sorry I could see no farther into things.

"I tell you," says he hastily, "if the King should kill

and take prisoners this whole army, General and all, the Parliament will have the victory; for we have lost more by slipping this opportunity of getting into London, than we shall ever get by ten battles."

I saw enough of this afterwards to convince me of the weight of what my father said, and so did the King too; but it was then too late. Advantages slipped in war are never recovered.

We were now in a full march to fight the Earl of Essex. It was on Sunday morning, the 24th of October, 1642; fair weather overhead, but the ground very heavy and dirty. As soon as we came to the top of Edgehill, we discovered their whole army. They were not drawn up, having had two miles to march that morning, but they were very busy forming their lines, and posting the regiments as they came up. Some of their horse were exceedingly fatigued, having marched forty-eight hours together; and had they been suffered to follow us three or four days' march farther, several of their regiments of horse would have been quite ruined, and their foot would have been rendered unserviceable for the present. But we had no patience.

As soon as our whole army was come to the top of the hill, we were drawn up in order of battle. The King's army made a very fine appearance; and indeed they were a body of gallant men as ever appeared in the field, and as well furnished at all points; the horse exceedingly well accoutred, being most of them gentlemen and volunteers, some whole regiments serving without pay; their horses very good and fit for service as could be desired. The whole army were not above 18,000 men, and the enemy not 1,000 over or under, though we had been told they were not above 12,000; but they had been reinforced with 4,000 men from Northampton. The King was with the General, the Earl of Lindsey, in the main battle; Prince Rupert commanded the right wing, and the Marquis of

Hertford, the Lord Willoughby, and several other very good officers the left.

The signal of battle being given with two cannon shots, we marched in order of battalia down the hill, being drawn up in two lines with bodies of reserve ; the enemy advanced to meet us much in the same form, with this difference only, that they had placed their cannon on their right, and the King had placed ours in the centre, before, or rather between two great brigades of foot. Their cannon began with us first, and did some mischief among the dragoons of our left wing ; but our officers, perceiving the shot took the men and missed the horses, ordered all to alight, and every man leading his horse, to advance in the same order ; and this saved our men, for most of the enemy's shot flew over their heads. Our cannon made a terrible execution upon their foot for a quarter of an hour, and put them into great confusion, till the General obliged them to halt, and changed the posture of his front, marching round a small rising ground by which he avoided the fury of our artillery.

By this time the wings were engaged, the King having given the signal of battle, and ordered the right wing to fall on. Prince Rupert, who, as is said, commanded that wing, fell on with such fury, and pushed the left wing of the Parliament army so effectually, that in a moment he filled all with terror and confusion. Commissary-General Ramsey, a Scotsman, a Low Country soldier, and an experienced officer, commanded their left wing, and though he did all that an expert soldier, and a brave commander could do, yet 'twas to no purpose ; his lines were immediately broken, and all overwhelmed in a trice. Two regiments of foot, whether as part of the left wing, or on the left of the main body, I know not, were disordered by their own horse, and rather trampled to death by the horses, than beaten by our men ; but they were so entirely broken and disordered, that I do not remember that ever they made one volley upon our men ; for their own horse

running away, and falling foul on these foot, were so vigorously followed by our men, that the foot never had a moment to rally or look behind them. The point of the left wing of horse were not so soon broken as the rest, and three regiments of them stood firm for some time. The dexterous officers of the other regiments taking the opportunity, rallied a great many of their scattered men behind them, and pieced in some troops with those regiments; but after two or three charges, with a brigade of our second line, following the Prince, made upon them, they also were broken with the rest.

Had Prince Rupert fallen in upon the foot, or wheeled to the left, and fallen in upon the rear of the enemy's right wing of horse, or returned to the assistance of the left wing of our horse, we had gained the most absolute and complete victory that could be; nor had 1,000 men of the enemy's army got off. But this Prince, who was full of fire, and pleased to see the rout of the enemy, pursued them quite to the town of Kineton, where indeed he killed abundance of their men, and some time also was lost in plundering the baggage.

But in the meantime, the glory and advantage of the day was lost to the King, for the right wing of the Parliament horse could not be so broken. Sir William Balfour made a desperate charge upon the point of the King's left, and had it not been for two regiments of dragoons who were planted in the reserve, had routed the whole wing, for he broke through the first line, and staggered the second, who advanced to their assistance, but was so warmly received by those dragoons, who came seasonably in, and gave their first fire on horseback, that his fury was checked, and having lost a great many men, was forced to wheel about to his own men; and had the King had but three regiments of horse at hand to have charged him, he had been routed. The rest of this wing kept their ground, and received the first fury of the enemy with great firmness; after which,

advancing in their turn, they were once masters of the Earl of Essex's cannon. And here we lost another advantage; for if any foot had been at hand to support these horse, they had carried off the cannon, or turned it upon the main battle of the enemy's foot, but the foot were otherwise engaged. The horse on this side fought with great obstinacy and variety of success a great while. Sir Philip Stapleton, who commanded the guards of the Earl of Essex, being engaged with a party of our Shrewsbury cavaliers, as we called them, was once in a fair way to have been cut off by a brigade of our foot, who, being advanced to fall on upon the Parliament's main body, flanked Sir Philip's horse in their way, and facing to the left, so furiously charged him with their pikes, that he was obliged to retire in great disorder, and with the loss of a great many men and horses.

All this while the foot on both sides were desperately engaged, and coming close up to the teeth of one another with the clubbed musket and push of pike, fought with great resolution, and a terrible slaughter on both sides, giving no quarter for a great while; and they continued to do thus, till, as if they were tired and out of wind, either party seemed willing enough to leave off and take breath. Those which suffered most were that brigade which had charged Sir William Stapleton's horse, who, being bravely engaged in the front with the enemy's foot, were, on the sudden, charged again in front and flank by Sir William Balfour's horse and disordered, after a very desperate defence. Here the King's standard was taken, the standard-bearer, Sir Edward Verney, being killed; but it was rescued again by Captain Smith, and brought to the King the same night, for which the King knighted the captain.

This brigade of foot had fought all the day, and had not been broken at last if any horse had been at hand to support them. The field began to be now clear; both armies stood, as it were, gazing at one another, only the King, having rallied his foot, seemed inclined to renew the

charge, and began to cannonade them, which they could not return, most of their cannon being nailed while they were in our possession, and all the cannoniers killed or fled; and our gunners did execution upon Sir William Balfour's troops for a good while.

My father's regiment being in the right with the Prince, I saw little of the fight but the rout of the enemy's left, and we had as full a victory there as we could desire, but spent too much time in it. We killed about 2,000 men in that part of the action, and having totally dispersed them, and plundered their baggage, began to think of our fellows when 'twas too late to help them. We returned, however, victorious to the King, just as the battle was over. The King asked the Prince what news. He told him he could give his Majesty a good account of the enemy's horse. "Ay, by G—d," says a gentleman that stood by me, "and of their carts too." That word was spoken with such a sense of the misfortune, and made such an impression in the whole army, that it occasioned some ill-blood afterwards among us; and but that the King took up the business, it had been of ill consequence, for some person who had heard the gentleman speak it, informed the Prince who it was, and the Prince resenting it, spoke something about it in the hearing of the party when the King was present. The gentleman, not at all surprised, told his Highness openly he had said the words; and though he owned he had no disrespect for his Highness, yet he could not but say, if it had not been so, the enemy's army had been better beaten. The Prince replied something very disobliging; upon which the gentleman came up to the King, and kneeling, humbly besought his Majesty to accept of his commission, and to give him leave to tell the Prince, that whenever his Highness pleased, he was ready to give him satisfaction. The Prince was exceedingly provoked, and as he was very passionate, began to talk very oddly, and without all government of himself. The gentleman, as bold as

he, but much calmer, preserved his temper, but maintained his quarrel; and the King was so concerned that he was very much out of humour with the Prince about it. However, his Majesty, upon consideration, soon ended the dispute by laying his commands on them both to speak no more of it for that day; and refusing the commission from the colonel, for he was no less, sent for them both next morning in private, and made them friends again.

But to return to our story. We came back to the King timely enough to put the Earl of Essex's men out of all humour of renewing the fight, and as I observed before, both parties stood gazing at one another, and our cannon playing upon them obliged Sir William Balfour's horse to wheel off in some disorder, but they returned us none again, which, as we afterwards understood, was, as I said before, for want of both powder and gunners, for the cannoniers and firemen were killed, or had quitted their train in the fight, when our horse had possession of their artillery; and as they had spiked up some of the cannon, so they had carried away fifteen carriages of powder.

Night coming on ended all discourse of more fighting, and the King drew off and marched towards the hills. I know no other token of victory which the enemy had than their lying in the field of battle all night, which they did for no other reason than that, having lost their baggage and provisions, they had nowhere to go, and which we did not, because we had good quarters at hand.

The number of prisoners and of the slain were not very unequal; the enemy lost more men, we most of quality. Six thousand men on both sides were killed on the spot, whereof, when our rolls were examined, we missed 2,500. We lost our brave general the old Earl of Lindsey, who was wounded and taken prisoner, and died of his wounds; Sir Edward Stradling, Colonel Lundsford, prisoners; and Sir Edward Verney and a great many gentlemen of quality slain. On the other hand we carried off Colonel Essex,

Colonel Ramsey, and the Lord St. John, who also died of his wounds; we took five ammunition waggons full of powder, and brought off about 500 horse in the defeat of the left wing, with eighteen standards and colours, and lost seventeen.

The slaughter of the left wing was so great, and the flight so effectual, that several of the officers rid clear away, coasting round, and got to London, where they reported that the Parliament army was entirely defeated—all lost, killed, or taken, as if none but them were left alive to carry the news. This filled them with consternation for a while, but when other messengers followed all was restored to quiet again, and the Parliament cried up their victory and sufficiently mocked God and their general with their public thanks for it. Truly, as the fight was a deliverance to them, they were in the right to give thanks for it; but as to its being a victory, neither side had much to boast of, and they less a great deal than we had.

—Daniel Defoe, *Memoirs of a Cavalier.*

XXI

How King Charles dealt with Friends and Foes

UPON the afternoon of a certain eventful day King Charles held his court in the Queen's apartments, which were opened at a particular hour to invited guests of a certain lower degree, but accessible without restriction to the higher classes of nobility who had from birth, and to the courtiers who held by office, the privilege of the *entrée.*

It was one part of Charles's character, which unquestionably rendered him personally popular, and postponed to a subsequent reign the precipitation of his family from the throne, that he banished from his court many of the formal restrictions with which it was in other reigns surrounded. He was conscious of the goodnatured grace of his manners, and trusted to it, often not in vain, to remove evil impressions arising from actions which he was sensible could not be justified on the grounds of liberal or national policy.

Charles's evenings, unless such as were destined to more secret pleasures, were frequently spent amongst all who had any pretence to approach a courtly circle ; and thus it was upon the night which we are treating of. Queen Catherine, reconciled or humbled to her fate, had long ceased to express any feelings of jealousy, nay, seemed so absolutely dead to such a passion, that she received at her drawing-room, without scruple and even with encouragement, the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland, and others, who

enjoyed, though in a less avowed character, the credit of having been royal favourites. Constraint of every kind was banished from a circle so composed, and which was frequented at the same time, if not by the wisest, at least by the wittiest courtiers who ever assembled round a monarch, and who, as many of them had shared the wants and shifts and frolics of his exile, had then acquired a sort of prospective licence, which the good-natured Prince, when he atrained his period of prosperity, could hardly have restrained had it suited his temper to do so. This, however, was the least of Charles's thoughts. His manners were such as secured him from indelicate obtrusion; and he sought no other protection from over-familiarity than what these and his ready wit afforded him.

On the present occasion he was peculiarly disposed to enjoy the scene of pleasure which had been prepared. He even felt a degree of satisfaction on receiving intelligence from the city that there had been disturbances in the streets, and that some of the more violent fanatics had betaken themselves to their meeting-houses, upon sudden summons, to inquire, as their preachers phrased it, into the causes of Heaven's wrath, and into the backsliding of the court, lawyers, and jury, by whom the false and bloody favourers of the Popish Plot were screened and cloaked from deserved punishment.

The King turned to a part of the stately hall, where everything was assembled which could, according to the taste of the age, make the time glide pleasantly away.

In one place, a group of the young nobility, and of the ladies of the court, listened to Empson, who was accompanying with his unrivalled breathings on the flute, a young siren, who, while her bosom palpitated with pride and with fear, warbled to the courtly and august presence the beautiful air beginning—

> "Young I am, and yet unskill'd
> How to make a lover yield," etc.

She performed her task in a manner so corresponding with the strains of the amatory poet, and the voluptuous air with which the words had been invested by the celebrated Purcel, that the men crowded around in ecstasies, while most of the ladies thought it proper either to look extremely indifferent to the words she sang, or to withdraw from the circle as quietly as possible. To the song succeeded a concerto, performed by a select band of most admirable musicians, which the King, whose taste was indisputable, had himself selected.

At other tables in the apartment the elder courtiers worshipped Fortune at the various fashionable games of ombre, quadrille, hazard, and the like; while heaps of gold, which lay before the players, augmented or dwindled with every turn of a card or cast of a die. Many a year's rent of fair estates was ventured upon the main or the odds; which, spent in the old deserted manor-house, had repaired the ravages of Cromwell upon its walls, and replaced the sources of good housekeeping and hospitality, that, exhausted in the last age by fine and sequestration, were now in a fair way of being annihilated by careless prodigality. Elsewhere, under cover of observing the gamester, or listening to the music, the gallantries of that all-licensed age were practised among the gay and fair, closely watched the whilst by the ugly or the old, who promised themselves at least the pleasure of observing, and it may be that of proclaiming, intrigues in which they could not be sharers.

From one table to another glided the Merry Monarch, exchanging now a glance with a court beauty, now a jest with a court wit, now beating time to the music, and anon losing or winning a few pieces of gold on the chance of the game to which he stood nearest;—the most amiable of voluptuaries—the gayest and best-natured of companions—the man that would, of all others, have best sustained his character, had life been a continued banquet, and its only

end to enjoy the passing hour, and send it away as pleasantly as might be.

But kings are least of all exempted from the ordinary lot of humanity; and Seged of Ethiopia is, amongst monarchs, no solitary example of the vanity of reckoning on a day or an hour of undisturbed serenity. An attendant on the court announced suddenly to their Majesties that a lady, who would only announce herself as a peeress of England, desired to be admitted into the Presence.

The Queen said, hastily, it was *impossible*. No peeress, without announcing her title, was entitled to the privilege of her rank.

"I could be sworn," said a noble in attendance, "that it is some whim of the Duchess of Newcastle."

The attendant who brought the message said that he did indeed believe it to be the duchess, both from the singularity of the message, and that the lady spoke with somewhat a foreign accent.

"In the name of madness, then," said the King, "let us admit her. Her Grace is an entire raree-show in her own person—a universal masquerade—indeed, a sort of private bedlam hospital, her whole ideas being like so many patients crazed upon the subjects of love and literature, who act nothing in their vagaries, save Minerva, Venus, and the nine Muses."

"Your Majesty's pleasure must always supersede mine," said the Queen. "I only hope I shall not be expected to entertain so a fantastic a personage."

"Am I to understand, then, your Majesty's pleasure is, that the lady is to be admitted?" said the usher.

"Certainly," said the King; "that is, if the incognita be really entitled to the honour. It may be as well to inquire her title; there are more madwomen abroad than the Duchess of Newcastle. I will walk into the ante-room myself and receive your answer."

But ere Charles had reached the lower end of the apart-

ment in his progress to the ante-room, the usher surprised the assembly by announcing a name which had not for many a year been heard in these courtly halls—"the Countess of Derby!"

Stately and tall, and still, at an advanced period of life, having a person unbroken by years, the noble lady advanced towards her sovereign, with a step resembling that with which she might have met an equal. There was indeed nothing in her manner that indicated either haughtiness or assumption unbecoming that presence; but her consciousness of wrongs, sustained from the administration of Charles, and of the superiority of the injured party over those from whom, or in whose name, the injury had been offered, gave her look dignity, and her step firmness. She was dressed in widow's weeds, of the same fashion which were worn at the time her husband was brought to the scaffold; and which, in the thirty years subsequent to that event, she had never permitted her tirewoman to alter.

The surprise was no pleasing one to the King; and, cursing in his heart the rashness which had allowed the lady entrance on the gay scene in which they were engaged, he saw at the same time the necessity of receiving her in a manner suitable to his own character, and her rank in the British court. He approached her with an air of welcome, into which he threw all his natural grace, while he began, "*Chère Comtesse de Derby, puissante Reine de Man, notre très auguste sœur*"——

"Speak English, sire, if I may presume to ask such a favour," said the Countess. "I am a peeress of this nation —mother to one English Earl, and widow, alas, to another! In England I have spent my brief days of happiness, my long years of widowhood and sorrow. France and its language are but to me the dreams of an uninteresting childhood. I know no tongue save that of my husband and my son. Permit me, as the widow and mother of Derby, thus to render my homage."

She would have kneeled, but the King gracefully prevented her, and, saluting her cheek, according to the form, led her towards the Queen, and himself performed the ceremony of introduction. "Your Majesty," he said, "must be informed that the Countess has imposed a restriction on French—the language of gallantry and compliment. I trust your Majesty will, though a foreigner, like herself, find enough of honest English to assure the Countess of Derby with what pleasure we see her at court, after the absence of so many years."

"I will endeavour to do so, at least," said the Queen, on whom the appearance of the Countess of Derby made a more favourable impression than that of many strangers, whom, at the King's request, she was in the habit of receiving with courtesy.

Charles himself again spoke. "To any other lady of the same rank I might put the question, why she was so long absent from the circle? I fear I can only ask the Countess of Derby what fortunate cause produces the pleasure of seeing her here?"

"No fortunate cause, my liege, though one most strong and urgent."

The King augured nothing agreeable from this commencement; and in truth, from the countess's first entrance, he had anticipated some unpleasant explanation, which he therefore hastened to parry, having first composed his features into an expression of sympathy and interest.

"If," said he, "the cause is of a nature in which we can render assistance, we cannot expect your ladyship should enter upon it at the present time; but a memorial addressed to our secretary, or, if it is more satisfactory, to ourselves directly, will receive our immediate, and I trust I need not add, our favourable construction."

The Countess bowed with some state, and answered, "My business, sire, is indeed important; but so brief, that it need not for more than a few minutes withdraw your ear

from what is more pleasing;—yet it is so urgent, that I am afraid to postpone it even for a moment."

"This is unusual," said Charles. "But you, Countess of Derby, are an unwonted guest, and must command my time. Does the matter require my private ear?"

"For my part," said the Countess, "the whole court might listen; but your Majesty may prefer hearing me in the presence of one or two of your counsellors."

"Ormond," said the King, looking round, "attend us for an instant—and do you, Arlington, do the same."

The King led the way into an adjoining cabinet, and, seating himself, requested the Countess would also take a chair.

"It needs not, sir," she replied; then pausing for a moment, as if to collect her spirits, she proceeded with firmness: "Your Majesty well said that no light cause had drawn me from my lonely habitation. I came not hither when the property of my son—that property which descended to him from a father who died for your Majesty's rights—was conjured away from him under pretext of justice, that it might first feed the avarice of the rebel Fairfax, and then supply the prodigality of his son-in-law, Buckingham."

"These are over harsh terms, lady," said the King. "A legal penalty was, as we remember, incurred by an act of irregular violence—so our courts and our laws term it, though personally I have no objection to call it, with you, an honourable revenge. But, admit it were such, in prosecution of the laws of honour, bitter legal consequences are often necessarily incurred."

"I come not to argue for my son's wasted and forfeited inheritance, sire," said the Countess; "I only take credit for my patience under that afflicting dispensation. I now come to redeem the honour of the House of Derby, more dear to me than all the treasures and lands which ever belonged to it."

"And by whom is the honour of the House of Derby impeached?" said the King; "for, on my word, you bring me the first news of it."

"Has there one Narrative, as these wild fictions are termed, been printed with regard to the Popish Plot—this pretended Plot, as I will call it—in which the honour of our house has not been touched and tainted? And are there not two noble gentlemen, father and son, allies of the House of Stanley, about to be placed in jeopardy of their lives, on account of matters in which we are the parties first impeached?"

The King looked around, and smiled to Arlington and Ormond. "The Countess's courage, methinks, shames ours. What lips dared have called the immaculate Plot *pretended*, or the Narrative of the witnesses, our preservers from Popish knaves, a wild fiction? But, madam," he said, "though I admire the generosity of your interference in behalf of the two Peverils, I must acquaint you that your interference is unnecessary — they are this morning acquitted."

"Now may God be praised!" said the Countess, folding her hands. "I have scarce slept since I heard the news of their impeachment; and have arrived here to surrender myself to your Majesty's justice, or to the prejudices of the nation, in hopes, by so doing, I might at least save the lives of my noble and generous friends, enveloped in suspicion only, or chiefly, by their connection with us. Are they indeed acquitted?"

"They are, by my honour," said the King. "I marvel you heard it not."

"I arrived but last night, and remained in the strictest seclusion," said the Countess, "afraid to make any inquiries that might occasion discovery ere I saw your Majesty."

"And now that we *have* met," said the King, taking her hand kindly—"a meeting which gives me the greatest pleasure—may I recommend to you speedily to return to

your royal island with as little *éclat* as you came hither? The world, my dear Countess, has changed since we were young. Men fought in the Civil War with good swords and muskets; but now we fight with indictments and oaths, and such like legal weapons. You are no adept in such warfare; and, though I am well aware you know how to hold out a castle, I doubt much if you have the art to parry off an impeachment. This Plot has come upon us like a land storm—there is no steering the vessel in the teeth of the tempest—we must run for the nearest haven, and happy if we can reach one."

"This is cowardice, my liege," said the Countess. "Forgive the word!—it is but a woman who speaks it. Call your noble friends around you, and make a stand like your royal father. There is but one right and one wrong—one honourable and forward course; and all others which deviate are oblique and unworthy."

"Your language, my venerated friend," said Ormond, who saw the necessity of interfering betwixt the dignity of the actual sovereign and the freedom of the Countess, who was generally accustomed to receive, not to pay observance, "your language is strong and decided, but it applies not to the times. It might occasion a renewal of the Civil War, and of all its mysteries, but could hardly be attended with the effects you sanguinely anticipate."

"You are too rash, my lady Countess," said Arlington, "not only to rush upon this danger yourself, but to desire to involve his Majesty. Let me say plainly, that, in this jealous time, you have done but ill to exchange the security of Castle Rushin for the chance of a lodging in the Tower of London."

"And were I to kiss the block there," said the Countess, 'as did my husband at Bolton-on-the-Moors, I would do so willingly, rather than forsake a friend!—and one, too, whom, as in the case of the younger Peveril, I have thrust upon danger."

"But have I not assured you that both of the Peverils, elder and younger, are freed from peril?" said the King; "and, my dear Countess, what can else tempt you to thrust *yourself* on danger, from which, doubtless, you expect to be relieved by my intervention? Methinks a lady of your judgment should not voluntarily throw herself into a river, merely that her friends might have the risk and merit of dragging her out."

The Countess reiterated her intention to claim a fair trial. The two counsellors again pressed their advice that she should withdraw, though under the charge of absconding from justice, and remain in her own feudal kingdom.

The King, seeing no termination to the debate, gently reminded the Countess that her Majesty would be jealous if he detained her ladyship longer, and offered her his hand to conduct her back to the company. This she was under the necessity of accepting, and returned accordingly to the apartments of state.

When Charles had reconducted the Countess of Derby into the presence-chamber, before he parted with her, he entreated her, in a whisper, to be governed by good counsel, and to regard her own safety; and then turned easily from her, as if to distribute his attentions equally among the other guests.

These were a good deal circumscribed at the instant, by the arrival of a party of five or six musicians; one of whom, a German, under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham, was particularly renowned for his performance on the violoncello, but had been detained in inactivity in the antechamber by the non-arrival of his instrument, which had now at length made its appearance.

The domestic who placed it before the owner, shrouded as it was within its wooden case, seemed heartily glad to be rid of his load, and lingered for a moment, as if interested in discovering what sort of instrument was to be produced that could weigh so heavily. His curiosity was satisfied,

and in a most extraordinary manner; for, while the musician was fumbling with the key, the case being for his greater convenience placed upright against the wall, the case and instrument itself at once flew open, and out started the dwarf, Geoffrey Hudson—at sight of whose unearthly appearance, thus suddenly introduced, the ladies shrieked, and ran backwards; the gentlemen started; and the poor German, on seeing the portentous delivery of his fiddle-case, tumbled on the floor in an agony, supposing, it might be, that his instrument was metamorphosed into the strange figure which supplied its place. So soon, however, as he recovered, he glided out of the apartment, and was followed by most of his companions.

"Hudson!" said the King, "my little old friend, I am not sorry to see you; though Buckingham, who I suppose is the purveyor of this jest, hath served us up but a stale one."

"Will your Majesty honour me with one moment's attention?" said Hudson.

"Assuredly, my good friend," said the King. "Old acquaintances are springing up in every quarter to-night; and our leisure can hardly be better employed than in listening to them. It was an idle trick of Buckingham," he added in a whisper to Ormond, "to send the poor thing hither, especially as he was to-day tried for the affair of the Plot. At any rate, he comes not to ask protection from us, having had the rare fortune to come off *Plot free*. He is but fishing, I suppose, for some little present or pension."

The little man, precise in court etiquette, yet impatient of the King's delaying to attend to him, stood in the midst of the floor, most valorously pawing and prancing, like a Scots pony assuming the airs of a war-horse, waving meanwhile his little hat with the tarnished feather, and bowing from time to time, as if impatient to be heard.

"Speak on, then, my friend," said Charles; "if thou hast some poetical address penned for thee, out with it, that

thou mayst have time to repose these flourishing little limbs of thine."

"No poetical speech have I, most mighty sovereign," answered the dwarf; "but, in plain and most loyal prose, I do accuse, before this company, the once noble Duke of Buckingham of high treason!"

"Well spoken, and manfully. Get on, man," said the King, who never doubted that this was the introduction to something burlesque or witty, not conceiving that the charge was made in solemn earnest.

A great laugh took place among such courtiers as heard, and among many who did not hear, what was uttered by the dwarf; the former entertained by the extravagant emphasis and gesticulation of the little champion, and the others laughing not the less loud that they laughed for example's sake, and upon trust.

"What matter is there for all this mirth?" said he, very indignantly; "Is it fit subject for laughing, that I, Geoffrey Hudson, Knight, do, before King and nobles, impeach George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, of high treason!"

"No subject of mirth, certainly," said Charles, composing his features; "but great matter of wonder. Come, cease this mouthing, and prancing, and mummery. If there be a jest, come out with it, man; and if not, even get thee to the beauffet, and drink a cup of wine to refresh thee after thy close lodging."

"I tell you, my liege," said Hudson impatiently, yet in a whisper, intended only to be audible by the King, "that if you spend over much time in trifling, you will be convinced by dire experience of Buckingham's treason. I tell you—I asseverate to your Majesty—two hundred armed fanatics will be here within the hour, to surprise the guards."

"Stand back, ladies," said the King, "or you may hear more than you will care to listen to. My Lord of Buckingham's jests are not always, you know, quite fitted for female ears; besides, we want a few words in private with our little

friend. You, my Lord of Ormond—you, Arlington" (and he named one or two others), "may remain with us."

The gay crowd bore back, and dispersed through the apartment—the men to conjecture what the end of this mummery, as they supposed it, was likely to prove; and what jest, as Sedley said, the bass fiddle had been brought to bed of—and the ladies to admire and criticise the antique dress and richly embroidered ruff and hood of the Countess of Derby, to whom the Queen was showing particular attention.

"And now, in the name of Heaven, and amongst friends," said the King to the dwarf, "what means all this?"

"Treason, my lord the King! Treason to his Majesty of England. When I was chambered in yonder instrument, my lord, the High-Dutch fellows who bore me carried me into a certain chapel, to see, as they said to each other, that all was ready. Sire, I went where bass fiddle never went before, even into a conventicle of Fifth-Monarchists; and when they brought me away, the preacher was concluding his sermon, and was within a 'Now to apply' of setting off like the bell-wether at the head of his flock, to surprise your Majesty in your royal court! I heard him through the sound-holes of my instrument, when the fellow set me down for a moment to profit by this precious doctrine."

"It would be singular," said Lord Arlington, "were there some reality at the bottom of this buffoonery; for we know these wild men have been consulting together to-day, and five conventicles have held a solemn fast."

"Nay," said the King, "if that be the case, they are certainly determined on some villany."

"Might I advise," said the Duke of Ormond, "I would summon the Duke of Buckingham to this Presence. His connections with the fanatics are well known, though he affects to conceal them."

"You would not, my lord, do his Grace the injustice to

treat him as a criminal on such a charge as this?" said the King. "However," he added, after a moment's consideration, "Buckingham is accessible to every sort of temptation, from the flightiness of his genius. I should not be surprised if he nourished hopes of an aspiring kind—I think we had some proof of it but lately. Hark ye, Chiffinch; go to him instantly, and bring him here on any fair pretext thou canst devise. I would fain save him from what lawyers call an overt act. The court would be dull as a dead horse were Buckingham to miscarry."

"Will not your Majesty order the Horse Guards to turn out?" said young Selby, who was present, and an officer.

"No, Selby," said the King, "I like not horse-play. But let them be prepared; and let the High Bailiff collect his civil officers, and command the Sheriffs to summon their worshipful attendants, from javelin-men to hangmen, and have them in readiness, in case of any sudden tumult —double the sentinels on the doors of the palace—and see no strangers get in."

"Or *out*," said the Duke of Ormond. "Where are the foreign fellows who brought in the dwarf?"

They were sought for, but they were not to be found. They had retreated, leaving their instruments, a circumstance which seemed to bear hard on the Duke of Buckingham, their patron.

Hasty preparations were made to provide resistance to any effort of despair which the supposed conspirators might be driven to; and in the meanwhile, the King, withdrawing with Arlington, Ormond, and a few other counsellors, into the cabinet where the Countess of Derby had had her audience, resumed the examination of the little discoverer. His declaration, though singular, was quite coherent; the strain of romance intermingled with it being in fact a part of his character, which often gave him the fate of being laughed at, when he would otherwise have been pitied, or even esteemed.

"She who had more than once visited his confinement."

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He commenced with a flourish about his sufferings for the Plot, which the impatience of Ormond would have cut short, had not the King reminded his Grace that the top, when it is not flogged, must needs go down of itself at the end of a definite time, while the application of the whip may keep it up for hours.

Geoffrey Hudson was, therefore, allowed to exhaust himself on the subject of his prison-house, which he informed the King was not without a beam of light—an emanation of loveliness—a mortal angel—quick of step and beautiful of eye, who had more than once visited his confinement with words of cheering and comfort.

"By my faith," said the King, "they fare better in Newgate than I was aware of. Who would have thought of the little gentleman being solaced with female society in such a place?"

"I pray your Majesty," said the dwarf, after the manner of a solemn protest, "to understand nothing amiss. My devotion to this fair creature is rather like what we poor Catholics pay to the blessed saints, than mixed with any grosser quality. Indeed, she seems rather a sylphid of the Rosicrucian system, than aught more carnal; being slighter, lighter, and less than the females of common life, who have something of that coarseness of make which is doubtless derived from the sinful and gigantic race of the antediluvians."

"Well, say on, man," quoth Charles. "Didst thou not discover this sylph to be a mere mortal wench ofter all?"

"Who?—I, my liege?—O fie!"

"Nay, little gentleman, do not be so particularly scandalized," said the King; "I promise you I suspect you of no audacity of gallantry."

"Time wears fast," said the Duke of Ormond impatiently, and looking at his watch. "Chiffinch hath been gone ten minutes, and ten minutes will bring him back."

"True," said Charles gravely. "Come to the point, Hudson; and tell us what this female has to do with your coming hither in this extraordinary manner."

"Everything, my lord," said little Hudson. "I saw her twice during my confinement in Newgate, and, in my thought, she is the very angel who guards my life and welfare; for, after my acquittal, as I walked towards the city with two tall gentlemen, who had been in trouble along with me, and just while we stood to our defence against a rascally mob, and just as I had taken possession of an elevated situation, to have some vantage against the great odds of numbers, I heard a heavenly voice sound, as it were, from a window behind me, counselling me to take refuge in a certain house; to which measure I readily persuaded my gallant friends the Peverils, who have always shown themselves willing to be counselled by me."

"Showing therein their wisdom at once and modesty," said the King. "But what chanced next? Be brief—be like thyself, man."

"For a time, sire," said the dwarf, "it seemed as if I were not the principal object of attention. First, the younger Peveril was withdrawn from us by a gentleman of venerable appearance, though something smacking of a Puritan, having boots of neat's leather, and wearing his weapon without a sword-knot. When Master Julian returned, he informed us, for the first time, that we were in the power of a body of armed fanatics, who were, as the poet says, prompt for direful act. And your Majesty will remark, that both father and son were in some measure desperate, and disregardful from that moment of the assurances which I gave them, that the star which I was bound to worship would, in her own time, shine forth in signal of our safety. May it please your Majesty, in answer to my hilarious exhortations to confidence, the father did but say *tush*, and the son *pshaw*, which showed

how men's prudence and manners are disturbed by affliction. Nevertheless, these two gentlemen, the Peverils, forming a strong opinion of the necessity there was to break forth, were it only to convey a knowledge of these dangerous passages to your Majesty, commenced an assault on the door of the apartment, I also assisting with the strength which Heaven hath given, and some threescore years have left me. We could not, as it unhappily proved, manage our attempt so silently but that our guards overheard us, and, entering in numbers, separated us from each other, and compelled my companions, at point of pike and poniard, to go to some other and more distant apartment, thus separating our fair society. I was again enclosed in the now solitary chamber, and I will own that I felt a certain depression of soul. But when bale is at highest, as the poet singeth, boot is at nighest, for a door of hope was suddenly opened——"

"In the name of God, my liege," said the Duke of Ormond, "let this poor creature's story be translated into the language of common sense by some of the scribblers of romances about court, and we may be able to make meaning of it."

Geoffrey Hudson looked with a frowning countenance of reproof upon the impatient old Irish nobleman, and said, with a very dignified air, "That one duke upon a poor gentleman's hand was enough at a time, and that, but for his present engagement and dependency with the Duke of Buckingham, he would have endured no such terms from the Duke of Ormond."

"Abate your valour, and diminish your choler, at our request, most puissant Sir Geoffrey Hudson," said the King; "and forgive the Duke of Ormond for my sake; but at all events go on with your story."

Geoffrey Hudson laid his hand on his bosom, and bowed in proud and dignified submission to his sovereign; then waved his forgiveness gracefully to Ormond,

accompanied with a horrible grin, which he designed for a smile of gracious forgiveness and conciliation. "Under the Duke's favour, then," he proceeded, "when I said a door of hope was opened to me, I meant a door behind the tapestry, from whence issued that fair vision—yet not so fair as lustrously dark, like the beauty of a continental night, where the cloudless azure sky shrouds us in a veil more lovely than that of day!—but I note your Majesty's impatience;—enough. I followed my beautiful guide into an apartment, where there lay, strangely intermingled, warlike arms and musical instruments. Amongst these I saw my own late place of temporary obscurity—a violoncello. To my astonishment she turned around the instrument, and, opening it behind by pressure of a spring, showed that it was filled with pistols, daggers, and ammunition made up in bandoliers. 'These,' she said, 'are this night destined to surprise the court of the unwary Charles'—your Majesty must pardon my using her own words; 'but if thou darest go in their stead, thou mayst be the saviour of King and kingdoms; if thou art afraid keep secret, I will myself try the adventure.' 'Now, may Heaven forbid that Geoffrey Hudson were craven enough, said I, to let thee run such a risk! You know not—you cannot know, what belongs to such ambuscades and concealments—I am accustomed to them—have lurked in the pocket of a giant, and have formed the contents of a pasty.' 'Get in then,' she said, 'and lose no time.' Nevertheless, while I prepared to obey, I will not deny that some cold apprehensions came over my hot valour, and I confessed to her, if it might be so, I would rather find my way to the palace on my own feet. But she would not listen to me, saying hastily, 'I would be intercepted, or refused admittance, and that I must embrace the means she offered me of introduction into the Presence, and, when there, tell the King to be on his guard—little more is necessary; for, once the scheme is known, it

becomes desperate.' Rashly and boldly I bade adieu to the daylight, which was then fading away. She withdrew the contents of the instrument destined for my concealment, and, having put them behind the chimney-board, introduced me in their room. As she clasped me in, I implored her to warn the men who were to be entrusted with me to take heed and keep the neck of the violincello uppermost; but ere I had completed my request, I found I was left alone and in darkness. Presently, two or three fellows entered, whom, by their language, which I in some sort understood, I perceived to be Germans, and under the influence of the Duke of Buckingham. I heard them receive from the leader a charge how they were to deport themselves, when they should assume the concealed arms —and, for I will do the Duke no wrong—I understood their orders were precise, not only to spare the person of the King, but also those of the courtiers, and to protect all who might be in the Presence against an irruption of the fanatics. In other respects, they had charge to disarm the Gentleman Pensioners in the guard-room, and, in fine, to obtain the command of the court."

The King looked disconcerted and thoughtful at this communication, and bade Lord Arlington see that Selby quietly made search into the contents of the other cases which had been brought as containing musical instruments. He then signed to the dwarf to proceed in his story, asking him again and again, and very solemnly, whether he was sure that he heard the Duke's name mentioned, as commanding or approving this action.

The dwarf answered in the affirmative.

"This," said the King, "is carrying the frolic somewhat far."

The dwarf proceeded to state that he was carried after his metamorphosis into the chapel, where he heard the preacher seemingly about the close of his harangue, the tenor of which he also mentioned. Words, he said,

could not express the agony which he felt when he found that his bearer, in placing the instrument in a corner, was about to invert its position; in which case, he said, human frailty might have proved too great for love, for loyalty, for true obedience, nay, for the fear of death, which was like to ensue on discovery; and he concluded that he greatly doubted he could not have stood on his head for many minutes without screaming aloud.

"I could not have blamed you," said the King; "placed in such a posture in the royal oak, I must needs have roared myself. Is this all you have to tell us of this strange conspiracy?" Sir Geoffrey Hudson replied in the affirmative, and the King presently subjoined—"Go, my little friend; your services shall not be forgotten. Since thou hast crept into the bowels of a fiddle for our service, we are bound in duty and conscience to find you a more roomy dwelling in future."

"It was a violoncello, if your Majesty is pleased to remember," said the little jealous man, "not a common fiddle; though, for your Majesty's service, I would have crept even into a kit."

"Whatever of that nature could have been performed by any subject of ours thou wouldst have enacted in our behalf—of that we hold ourselves certain. Withdraw for a little; and hark ye, for the present, beware what you say about this matter. Let your appearance be considered—do you mark me?—as a frolic of the Duke of Buckingham; and not a word of conspiracy."

"Were it not better to put him under some restraint, sire?" said the Duke of Ormond, when Hudson had left the room.

"It is unnecessary," said the King. "I remember the little wretch of old. Fortune, to make him the model of absurdity, has closed a most lofty soul within that little miserable carcass. For wielding his sword and keeping his word, he is a perfect Don Quixote in decimo-octavo. He

shall be taken care of. But, oddsfish, my lords, is not this freak of Buckingham too villainous and ungrateful?"

"He had not had the means of being so, had your Majesty," said the Duke of Ormond, "been less lenient on other occasions."

"My lord, my lord," said Charles hastily—"your lordship is Buckingham's known enemy—we will take other and more impartial counsel. Arlington, what think you of all this?"

"May it please your Majesty," said Arlington, "I think the thing is absolutely impossible, unless the Duke has had some quarrel with your Majesty, of which we know nothing. His Grace is very flighty, doubtless; but this seems actual insanity."

"Why, faith," said the King, "some words passed betwixt us this morning—his Duchess, it seems, is dead—and, to lose no time, his Grace had cast his eyes about for means of repairing the loss, and had the assurance to ask our consent to woo my niece, Lady Anne."

"Which your Majesty of course rejected?" said the statesman.

"And not without rebuking his assurance," added the King.

"In private, sire, or before any witnesses?" said the Duke of Ormond.

"Before no one," said the King—"excepting, indeed, little Chiffinch; and he, you know, is no one."

"*Hinc illæ lachrymæ*," said Ormond. "I know his Grace well. While the rebuke of his aspiring petulance was a matter betwixt your Majesty and him, he might have let it pass by; but a check before a fellow from whom it was likely enough to travel through the court, was a matter to be revenged."

Here Selby came hastily from the other room, to say that his Grace of Buckingham had just entered the presence-chamber.

The King rose. "Let a boat be in readiness, with a party of the Yeomen," said he. "It may be necessary to attach him of treason, and send him to the Tower."

"Should not a secretary of state's warrant be prepared?" said Ormond.

"No, my lord Duke," said the King sharply. "I still hope that the necessity may be avoided."

At no period of his life, not even when that life was in imminent danger, did the constitutional gaiety of Charles seem more overclouded, than when waiting for the return of Chiffinch with the Duke of Buckingham. His mind revolted at the idea that the person to whom he had been so particularly indulgent, and whom he had selected as the friend of his lighter hours and amusements, should prove capable of having tampered with a plot apparently directed against his liberty and life. He more than once examined the dwarf anew, but could extract nothing more than his first narrative contained.

The persons who had been despatched to watch the motions of Master Weiver's congregation, brought back word that they had quietly dispersed. It was known, at the same time, that they had met in arms, but this augured no particular design of aggression, at a time when all true Protestants conceived themselves in danger of immediate massacre; when the fathers of the city had repeatedly called out the Train-Bands, and alarmed the citizens of London, under the idea of an instant insurrection of the Catholics; and when, to sum the whole up, in the emphatic words of an alderman of the day, there was a general belief that they would all waken some unhappy morning with their throats cut. Who was to do these dire deeds, it was more difficult to suppose; but all admitted the possibility that they might be achieved, since one justice of the peace was already murdered. There was, therefore, no inference of hostile intentions against the State, to be decidedly derived from a congregation of Protestants *par excellence*,

military from old associations, bringing their arms with them to a place of worship, in the midst of a panic so universal.

While various reports were making from without, and while their tenor was discussed by the King, and such nobles and statesmen as he thought proper to consult on the occasion, a gradual sadness and anxiety mingled with, and finally silenced, the mirth of the evening. All became sensible that something unusual was going forward; and the unwonted distance which Charles maintained from his guests, while it added greatly to the dulness that began to predominate in the presence-chamber, gave intimation that something unusual was labouring in the King's mind.

Thus gaming was neglected—the music was silent, or played without being heard—gallants ceased to make compliments, and ladies to expect them; and a sort of apprehensive curiosity pervaded the circle. Each asked the others why they were grave; and no answer was returned, any more than could have been rendered by a herd of cattle instinctively disturbed by the approach of a thunderstorm.

To add to the general apprehension, it began to be whispered that one or two of the guests, who were desirous of leaving the palace, had been informed no one could be permitted to retire until the general hour of dismissal. And these, gliding back into the hall, communicated in whispers that the sentinels at the gates were doubled, and that there was a troop of the Horse Guards drawn up in the court—circumstances so unusual as to excite the most anxious curiosity.

Such was the state of the court, when wheels were heard without, and the bustle which took place denoted the arrival of some person of consequence.

"Here comes Chiffinch," said the King, "with his prey in his clutch."

It was indeed the Duke of Buckingham; nor did he

approach the royal presence without emotion. On entering the court, the flambeaux which were borne around the carriage gleamed on the scarlet coats, laced hats, and drawn broadswords of the Horse Guards—a sight unusual, and calculated to strike terror into a conscience which was none of the clearest.

The Duke alighted from the carriage, and only said to the officer whom he saw upon duty, "You are late under arms to-night, Captain Carleton."

"Such are our orders, sir," answered Carleton, with military brevity; and then commanded the four dismounted sentinels at the under gate to make way for the Duke of Buckingham. His Grace had no sooner entered, than he heard behind him the command, "Move close up, sentinels —closer yet to the gate." And he felt as if all chance of rescue were excluded by the sound.

As he advanced up the grand staircase, there were other symptoms of alarm and precaution. The Yeomen of the Guard were mustered in unusual numbers, and carried carabines instead of their halberds; and the Gentlemen Pensioners, with their partisans, appeared also in proportional force. In short, all that sort of defence which the royal household possesses within itself, seemed, for some hasty and urgent reason, to have been placed under arms, and upon duty.

Buckingham ascended the royal staircase with an eye attentive to these preparations, and a step steady and slow, as if he counted each step on which he trod. When he entered the presence-chamber the King stood in the midst of the apartment, surrounded by the personages with whom he had been consulting. The rest of the brilliant assembly, scattered into groups, looked on at some distance. All were silent when Buckingham entered, in hopes of receiving some explanation of the mysteries of the evening. All bent forward, though etiquette forbade them to advance, to catch, if possible, something of what was about to pass

betwixt the King and his intriguing statesman. At the same time, those counsellors who stood around Charles, drew back on either side, so as to permit the Duke to pay his respects to his Majesty in the usual form. He went through the ceremonial with his accustomed grace, but was received by Charles with much unwonted gravity.

"We have waited for you for some time, my lord Duke. It is long since Chiffinch left us, to request your attendance here. I see you are elaborately dressed. Your toilet was needless on the present occasion."

"Needless to the splendour of your Majesty's court," said the Duke, "but not needless on my part. This chanced to be Black Monday at York Place, and my club of *Pendables* were in full glee when your Majesty's summons arrived. I could not be in the company of Ogle, Maniduc, Dawson, and so forth, but what I must needs make some preparation, and some ablution, ere entering the circle here."

"I trust the purification will be complete," said the King, without any tendency to the smile which always softened features, that, ungilded by its influence, were dark, harsh, and even severe. "We wished to ask your Grace concerning the import of a sort of musical mask which you designed us here, but which miscarried, as we are given to understand."

"It must have been a great miscarriage indeed," said the Duke, "since your Majesty looks so serious on it. I thought to have done your Majesty a pleasure (as I have seen you condescend to be pleased with such passages), by sending the contents of that bass-viol; but I fear the jest has been unacceptable—I fear the fireworks may have done mischief."

"Not the mischief they were designed for, perhaps," said the King gravely; "you see, my lord, we are all alive and unsinged."

"Long may your Majesty remain so," said the Duke;

"yet I see there is something misconstrued on my part—it must be a matter unpardonable, however little intended, since it hath displeased so indulgent a master."

"Too indulgent a master, indeed, Buckingham," replied the King; "and the fruit of my indulgence has been to change loyal men into traitors."

"May it please your Majesty, I cannot understand this," said the Duke.

"Follow us, my lord," answered Charles, "and we will endeavour to explain our meaning."

Attended by the same lords who stood around him, and followed by the Duke of Buckingham, on whom all eyes were fixed, Charles retired into the same cabinet which had been the scene of repeated consultations in the course of the evening. There, leaning with his arms crossed on the back of an easy-chair, Charles proceeded to interrogate the suspected nobleman.

"Let us be plain with each other. Speak out, Buckingham. What, in one word, was to have been the regale intended for us this evening?"

"A petty mask, my lord," answered the Duke. "I had destined a little dancing-girl to come out of that instrument, who, I thought, would have performed to your Majesty's liking—a few Chinese fireworks there were, which, thinking the entertainment was to have taken place in the marble hall, might, I hoped, have been discharged with good effect, and without the slightest alarm, at the first appearance of my little sorceress, and were designed to have masked, as it were, her entrance upon the stage. I hope there have been no perukes singed—no ladies frightened—no hopes of noble descent interrupted by my ill-fancied jest?"

"We have seen no such fireworks, my lord; and your female dancer, of whom we now hear for the first time, came forth in the form of our old acquaintance, Geoffrey Hudson, whose dancing days are surely ended."

"Your Majesty surprises me! I beseech you, let Christian be sent for—Edward Christian—he will be found lodging in a large old house near Sharper the cutler's, in the Strand. As I live by bread, sire, I trusted him with the arrangement of this matter, as indeed the dancing-girl was his property. If he has done aught to dishonour my concert, or disparage my character, he shall die under the baton."

"It is singular," said the King, "and I have often observed it, that this fellow Christian bears the blame of all men's enormities—he performs the part which, in a great family, is usually assigned to that mischief-doing personage, Nobody. When Chiffinch blunders, he always quotes Christian. When Sheffield writes a lampoon, I am sure to hear of Christian having corrected, or copied, or dispersed it—he is the *ame damnée* of every one about my court—the scapegoat, who is to carry away all their iniquities; and he will have a cruel load to bear into the wilderness. But for Buckingham's sins, in particular, he is the regular and uniform sponsor; and I am convinced his Grace expects Christian should suffer every penalty he has incurred, in this world or the next."

"Not so," with the deepest reverence replied the Duke. "I have no hope of being either hanged or damned by proxy; but it is clear some one hath tampered with and altered my device. If I am accused of aught, let me at least hear the charge, and see my accuser."

"That is but fair," said the King. "Bring our little friend from behind the chimney-board." Hudson being accordingly produced, he continued: "There stands the Duke of Buckingham. Repeat before him the tale you told us. Let him hear what were those contents of the bass-viol which were removed that you might enter it. Be not afraid of any one, but speak the truth boldly."

"May it please your Majesty," said Hudson, "fear is a thing unknown to me."

"His body has no room to hold such a passion; or there is too little of it to be worth fearing for," said Buckingham. "But let him speak."

Ere Hudson had completed his tale, Buckingham interrupted him by exclaiming, "Is it possible that I can be suspected by your Majesty on the word of this pitiful variety of the baboon tribe?"

"Villain lord, I appeal thee to the combat!" said the little man, highly offended at the appellation thus bestowed on him.

"La you there now!" said the Duke. "The little animal is quite crazed, and defies a man who need ask no other weapon than a corking-pin to run him through the lungs, and whose single kick could hoist him from Dover to Calais without yacht or wherry. And what can you expect from an idiot, who is *engoué* of a common rope-dancing girl, that capered on a packthread at Ghent in Flanders, unless they were to club their talents to set up a booth at Bartholomew Fair? Is it not plain that, supposing the little animal is not malicious, as indeed his whole kind bear a general and most cankered malice against those who have the ordinary proportions of humanity—Grant, I say, that this were not a malicious falsehood of his, why, what does it amount to?—That he has mistaken squibs and Chinese crackers for arms! He says not he himself touched or handled them; and, judging by the sight alone, I question if the infirm old creature, when any whim or preconception hath possession of his noddle, can distinguish betwixt a blunderbuss and a black pudding."

The horrible clamour which the dwarf made so soon as he heard this disparagement of his military skill—the haste with which he blundered out a detail of his warlike experiences—and the absurd grimaces which he made in order to enforce his story, provoked not only the risibility of Charles, but even of the statesmen around him, and added absurdity to the motley complexion of the scene. The

"VILLAIN LORD, I APPEAL THEE TO THE COMBAT,"
SAID THE LITTLE MAN.

King terminated this dispute by commanding the dwarf to withdraw.

A more regular discussion of his evidence was then resumed, and Ormond was the first who pointed out that it went further than had been noticed, since the little man had mentioned a certain extraordinary and treasonable conversation held by the Duke's dependents, by whom he had been conveyed to the palace.

"I am sure not to lack my Lord of Ormond's good word," said the Duke scornfully; "but I defy him alike, and all my other enemies, and shall find it easy to show that this alleged conspiracy, if any grounds for it at all exist, is a mere sham plot, got up to turn the odium justly attached to the Papists upon the Protestants. Here is a half hanged creature, who, on the very day he escapes from the gallows, which many believe was his most deserved destiny, comes to take away the reputation of a Protestant peer—and on what? On the treasonable conversation of three or four German fiddlers, heard through the sound-holes of a violoncello, and that, too, when the creature was encased in it, and mounted on a man's shoulders! The urchin, too, in repeating their language, shows he understands German as little as my horse does; and if he did rightly hear, truly comprehend, and accurately report what they said, still, is my honour to be touched by the language held by such persons as these are, with whom I have never communicated, otherwise than men of my rank do with those of their calling and capacity? Pardon me, sire, if I presume to say that the profound statesmen who endeavoured to stifle the Popish Conspiracy by the pretended Meal-tub Plot, will take little more credit by their figments about fiddles and concertos."

The assistant counsellors looked at each other; and Charles turned on his heel, and walked through the room with long steps.

At this point the Peverils, father and son, were an-

nounced to have reached the palace, and were ordered into the royal presence.

When the father and son entered the cabinet of audience, it was easily visible that Sir Geoffrey had obeyed the summons as he would have done the trumpet's call to horse; and his dishevelled grey locks and half-arranged dress, though they showed zeal and haste, such as he would have used when Charles I. called him to attend a council of war, seemed rather indecorous in a pacific drawing-room. He paused at the door of the cabinet, but, when the King called on him to advance, came hastily forward, with every feeling of his earlier and later life afloat and contending in his memory, threw himself on his knees before the King, seized his hand, and, without even an effort to speak, wept aloud. Charles, who generally felt deeply so long as an impressive object was before his eyes, indulged for a moment the old man's rapture.—"My good Sir Geoffrey," he said, "you have had some hard measure; we owe you amends, and will find time to pay our debt."

"No suffering—no debt," said the old man; "I cared not what the rogues said of me—I knew they could never get twelve honest fellows to believe a word of their most damnable lies. I did long to beat them when they called me traitor to your Majesty—that I confess—But to have such an early opportunity of paying my duty to your Majesty, overpays it all. The villains would have persuaded me I ought not to come to court—aha!"

The Duke of Ormond perceived that the King coloured much; for in truth it was from the court that the private intimation had been given to Sir Geoffrey to go down to the country without appearing at Whitehall; and he, moreover, suspected that the jolly old knight had not risen from his dinner altogether dry-lipped, after the fatigues of a day so agitating. "My old friend," he whispered, "you forget that your son is to be presented—permit me to have that honour."

"I crave your Grace's pardon humbly," said Sir Geoffrey, "but it is an honour I design for myself, as I apprehend no one can so utterly surrender or deliver him up to his Majesty's service as the father that begot him is entitled to do. Julian, come forward, and kneel. Here he is, please your Majesty—Julian Peveril—a chip of the old block—as stout, though scarce so tall a tree, as the old trunk when at the freshest. Take him to you, sir, for a faithful servant, *à vendre et à pendre*, as the French say; if he fears fire or steel, axe or gallows, in your Majesty's service, I renounce him—he is no son of mine—I disown him, and he may go to the Isle of Man, the Isle of Dogs, or the Isle of Devils, for what I care."

Charles winked to Ormond, and having, with his wonted courtesy, expressed his thorough conviction that Julian would imitate the loyalty of his ancestors, and especially of his father, added, that he believed his Grace of Ormond had something to communicate which was of consequence to his service. Sir Geoffrey made his military reverence at this hint, and marched off in the rear of the Duke, who proceeded to inquire of him concerning the events of the day. Charles, in the meanwhile, having in the first place ascertained that the son was not in the same genial condition with the father, demanded and received from him a precise account of all the proceedings subsequent to the trial.

Julian, with the plainness and precision which such a subject demanded, when treated in such a presence, narrated all that had happened down to the entrance of Bridgenorth; and his Majesty was so much pleased with his manner, that he congratulated Arlington on their having gained the evidence of at least one man of sense to these dark and mysterious events. But when Bridgenorth was brought upon the scene, Julian hesitated to bestow a name upon him; and although he mentioned the chapel which he had seen filled with men in arms, and the violent language of the preacher, he added, with earnestness, that, notwith-

standing all this, the men departed without coming to any extremity, and had all left the place before his father and he were set at liberty.

"And you retired quietly to your dinner in Fleet Street, young man," said the King severely, "without giving a magistrate notice of the dangerous meeting which was held in the vicinity of our palace, and who did not conceal their intention of proceeding to extremities?"

Peveril blushed, and was silent. The King frowned, and stepped aside to communicate with Ormond, who reported that the father seemed to have known nothing of the matter.

"And the son, I am sorry to say," said the King, "seems more unwilling to speak the truth than I should have expected. We have all variety of evidence in this singular investigation—a mad witness like the dwarf, a drunken witness like the father, and now a dumb witness. Young man," he continued, addressing Julian, "your behaviour is less frank than I expected from your father's son. I must know who this person is with whom you held such familiar intercourse—you know him, I presume?"

Julian acknowledged that he did, but, kneeling on one knee, entreated his Majesty's forgiveness for concealing his name; "he had been freed," he said, "from his confinement, on promising to that effect."

"That was a promise made, by your own account, under compulsion," answered the King, "and I cannot authorize your keeping it; it is your duty to speak the truth—if you are afraid of Buckingham, the Duke shall withdraw."

"I have no reason to fear the Duke of Buckingham," said Peveril; "that I had an affair with one of his household was the man's own fault, and not mine."

"Oddsfish!" said the King, "the light begins to break in on me—I thought I remembered thy physiognomy. Wert thou not the very fellow whom I met at Chiffinch's yonder morning? The matter escaped me since; but now

I recollect thou saidst then that thou wert the son of that jolly old three-bottle baronet yonder."

"It is true," said Julian, "that I met your Majesty at Master Chiffinch's, and I am afraid had the misfortune to displease you; but——"

"No more of that, young man—no more of that. But I recollect you had with you that beautiful dancing siren. Buckingham, I will hold you gold to silver that she was the intended tenant of the bass fiddle!"

"Your Majesty has rightly guessed it," said the Duke; "and I suspect she has put a trick upon me by substituting the dwarf in her place; for Christian thinks——"

"Damn Christian!" said the King hastily. "I wish they would bring him hither, that universal referee." And as the wish was uttered, Christian's arrival was announced. "Let him attend," said the King. "But hark—a thought strikes me. Here, Master Peveril—yonder dancing maiden that introduced you to us by the singular agility of her performance, is she not, by your account, a dependent on the Countess of Derby?"

"I have known her such for years," answered Julian.

"Then we will call the Countess hither," said the King. "It is fit we should learn who this little fairy really is; and if she be now so absolutely at the beck of Buckingham, and this Master Christian of his—why, I think it would be but charity to let her ladyship know so much, since I question if she will wish, in that case, to retain her in her service. Besides," he continued, speaking apart, "this Julian, to whom suspicion attaches in these matters from his obstinate silence, is also of the Countess's household. We will sift this matter to the bottom, and do justice to all."

The Countess of Derby, hastily summoned, entered the royal closet at one door, just as Christian and Zarah, or Fenella, were ushered in by the other. The old Knight of Martindale, who had ere this returned to the Presence, was scarce controlled, even by the signs which she made, so

much was he desirous of greeting his old friend; but, as Ormond laid a kind restraining hand upon his arm, he was prevailed on to sit still.

The Countess, after a deep reverence to the King, acknowledged the rest of the nobility present by a slighter reverence, smiled to Julian Peveril, and looked with surprise at the unexpected apparition of Fenella. Buckingham bit his lip, for he saw the introduction of Lady Derby was likely to confuse and embroil every preparation which he had arranged for his defence; and he stole a glance at Christian, whose eye, when fixed on the Countess, assumed the deadly sharpness which sparkles in the adder's, while his cheek grew almost black under the influence of strong emotion.

"Is there any one in this Presence whom your ladyship recognises," said the King graciously, "besides your old friends of Ormond and Arlington?"

"I see, my liege, two worthy friends of my husband's house," replied the Countess: "Sir Geoffrey Peveril and his son—the latter a distinguished member of my son's household."

"Any one else?" continued the King.

"An unfortunate female of my family, who disappeared from the Island of Man at the same time when Julian Peveril left it on business of importance. She was thought to have fallen from the cliff into the sea."

"Had your ladyship any reason to suspect—pardon me," said the King, "for putting such a question—any improper intimacy between Master Peveril and this same female attendant?"

"My liege," said the Countess, colouring indignantly, "my household is of reputation."

"Nay, my lady, be not angry," said the King; "I did but ask—such things will befall in the best regulated families."

"Not in mine, sire," said the Countess. "Besides that,

in common pride and in common honesty, Julian Peveril is incapable of intriguing with an unhappy creature, removed by her misfortune almost beyond the limits of humanity."

The King looked fixedly at Peveril, and then said, "Egad, I hold it next to certain that this wench put the change on his Grace, and popped the poor dwarf into the bass-viol, reserving her own more precious hours to be spent with Master Julian Peveril. Think you not so, Sir Christian, you, the universal referee? Is there any truth in this conjecture?"

Christian stole a glance at Zarah, and read that in her eye which embarrassed him. "He did not know," he said; "he had indeed engaged this unrivalled performer to take the proposed part in the mask; and she was to have come forth in the midst of a shower of lambent fire, very artificially prepared with perfumes, to overcome the smell of the powder; but he knew not why—excepting that she was wilful and capricious, like all great geniuses—she had certainly spoiled the concert by cramming in that more bulky dwarf."

"I should like," said the King, "to see this little maiden stand forth, and bear witness in such manner as she can express herself on this mysterious matter. Can any one here understand her mode of communication?"

Christian said he knew something of it since he had become acquainted with her in London. The Countess spoke not till the King asked her, and then owned drily that she had necessarily some habitual means of intercourse with one who had been immediately about her person for so many years.

Examined after her own fashion, Zarah confirmed the tale of Christian in all its points, and admitted that she had deranged the project laid for a mask, by placing the dwarf in her own stead; the cause of her doing so she declined to assign, and the Countess pressed her no further.

"Everything tells to exculpate my Lord of Buckingham,' said Charles, "from so absurd an accusation: the dwarf's testimony is too fantastic, that of the two Peverils does not in the least affect the Duke; that of the dumb damsel completely contradicts the possibility of his guilt. Methinks, my lords, we should acquaint him that he stands acquitted of a complaint, too ridiculous to have been subjected to a more serious scrutiny than we have hastily made upon this occasion."

Arlington bowed in acquiescence, but Ormond spoke plainly.—"I should suffer, sire, in the opinion of the Duke of Buckingham, brilliant as his talents are known to be, should I say that I am satisfied in my own mind on this occasion. But I subscribe to the spirit of the times; and I agree it would be highly dangerous, on such accusations as we have been able to collect, to impeach the character of a zealous Protestant like his Grace. Had he been a Catholic, under such circumstances of suspicion, the Tower had been too good a prison for him."

Buckingham bowed to the Duke of Ormond, with a meaning which even his triumph could not disguise. "*Tu me la pagherai!*" he muttered, in a tone of deep and abiding resentment; but the stout old Irishman, who had long since already braved his utmost wrath, cared little for this expression of his displeasure.

The King then, signing to the other nobles to pass into the public apartments, stopped Buckingham as he was about to follow them; and when they were alone, asked, with a significant tone, which brought all the blood in the Duke's veins into his countenance, "When was it, George, that your useful friend Colonel Blood became a musician? You are silent," he said; "do not deny the charge, for yonder villain, once seen, is remembered for ever. Down, down on your knees, George, and acknowledge that you have abused my easy temper. Seek for no apology—none will serve your turn. I saw the man myself,

among your Germans, as you call them; and you know what I must needs believe from such a circumstance."

"Believe that I have been guilty—most guilty, my liege and King," said the Duke, conscience-striken, and kneeling down;—"believe that I was misguided—that I was mad. Believe anything but that I was capable of harming, or being accessory to harm, your person."

"I do not believe it," said the King; "I think of you, Villiers, as the companion of my dangers and my exile, and am so far from supposing you mean worse than you say, that I am convinced you acknowledge more than ever you meant to attempt."

"By all that is sacred," said the Duke, still kneeling, "had I not been involved to the extent of life and fortune with the villain Christian——"

"Nay, if you bring Christian on the stage again," said the King smiling, "it is time for me to withdraw. Come, Villiers, rise—I forgive thee, and only recommend one act of penance—the curse you yourself bestowed on the dog who bit you—marriage, and retirement to your country-seat."

The Duke rose abashed, and followed the King into the circle, which Charles entered, leaning on the shoulder of his repentant peer; to whom he showed so much countenance, as led the most acute observers present to doubt the possibility of there existing any real cause for the surmises to the Duke's prejudice.

The Countess of Derby had in the meanwhile consulted with the Duke of Ormond, with the Peverils, and with her other friends; and, by their unanimous advice, though with considerable difficulty, became satisfied, that to have thus shown herself at Court was sufficient to vindicate the honour of her house; and that it was her wisest course, after having done so, to retire to her insular dominions, without further provoking the resentment of a powerful faction. She took farewell of the King in form.

"I would," said the King, "that all our political intrigues and feverish alarms could terminate as harmlessly as now. Here is a plot without a drop of blood; and all the elements of a romance, without its conclusion. Here we have a wandering island princess (I pray my lady of Derby's pardon), a dwarf, a Moorish sorceress, an impenitent rogue, and a repentant man of rank, and yet all ends without either hanging or marriage."

"Not altogether without the latter," said the Countess, "There is a certain Major Bridgenorth, who, by dint of the law, hath acquired strong possession over the domains of Peveril, which he is desirous to restore to the ancient owners, with much fair land besides, conditionally, that our young Julian will receive them as the dowry of his only child and heir."

"By my faith," said the King, "she must be a foul-favoured wench, indeed, if Julian requires to be pressed to accept her on such fair conditions."

"They love each other like lovers of the last age," said the Countess; "but the stout old knight likes not the Roundheaded alliance."

"Our royal recommendation shall put that to rights," said the King; "Sir Geoffrey Peveril has not suffered hardship so often at our command, that he will refuse our recommendation when it comes to make him amends for all his losses."

It may be supposed the King did not speak without being fully aware of the unlimited ascendancy which he possessed over the old Tory; for within four weeks afterwards the bells of Martindale-Moultrassie were ringing for the union of the families, from whose estates it takes its compound name, and the beacon-light of the Castle blazed high over hill and dale, and summoned all to rejoice who were within twenty miles of its gleam.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Peveril of the Peak.*

XXII

The fall of Argyle

AS soon as it was known abroad that Charles the Second was dead, the Covenanters, who had taken refuge in Holland from the Persecution, assembled to consult what ought then to be done. For the Papist, James Stuart, on the death of his brother, had caused himself to be proclaimed King of Scotland, without taking those oaths by which alone he could be entitled to assume the Scottish crown.

At the head of this congregation was the Earl of Argyle, who, some years before, had incurred the aversion of the tyrant to such a degree, that, by certain of those fit tools for any crime, then in dismal abundance about the court of Holyrood, he had procured his condemnation as a traitor, and would have brought him to the scaffold, had the Earl not fortunately effected his escape. And it was resolved by that congregation, that the principal personages then present should form themselves into a Council, to concert the requisite measures for the deliverance of their native land; the immediate issue of which was, that a descent should be made by Arygle among his vassals, in order to draw together a sufficient host to enable them to wage war against the Usurper, for so they lawfully and rightly denominated James Stuart.

The first hint that I gleaned of this design was through the means of Mrs. Brownlee. She was invited one afternoon by the gentlewoman of the Lady Sophia Lindsay, the

Earl's daughter-in-law, to view certain articles of female bravery which had been sent from Holland by his Lordship to her mistress; and, as her custom was, she, on her return home, descanted at large of all that she had seen and heard.

The receipt, at that juncture, of such gear from the Earl of Argyle, by such a Judith of courage and wisdom as the Lady Sophia Lindsay, seemed to me very remarkable, and I could not but jealouse that there was something about it like the occultation of a graver correspondence. I therefore began to question Mrs. Brownlee how the paraphernalia had come, and what the Earl, according to the last accounts, was doing; which led her to expatiate on many things, though vague and desultory, that were yet in concordance with what I had overheard the Lord Perth say to the Earl of Aberdeen in the Bishop's house: in the end, I gathered that the presents were brought over by the skipper of a sloop, one Roderick Macfarlane, whom I forthwith determined to see, in order to pick from him what intelligence I could, without being at the time well aware in what manner the same would prove useful. I felt myself, however, stirred from within to do so; and I had hitherto, in all that concerned my avenging vow, obeyed every instinctive impulse.

Accordingly, next morning, I went early to the shore of Leith, and soon found the vessel and Roderick Macfarlane, to whom I addressed myself, inquiring, as if I intended to go thither, when he was likely to depart again for Amsterdam.

While I was speaking to him, I observed something in his mien above his condition; and that his hands were fair and delicate, unlike those of men inured to maritime labour. He perceived that I was particular in my inspection, and his countenance became troubled, and he looked as if he wist not what to do.

"Fear no ill," said I to him; "I am one in the jaws

"She was invited one afternoon to view certain articles of female bravery."

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of jeopardy ; in sooth, I have no intent to pass into Holland, but only to learn whether there be any hope that the Earl of Argyle and those with him will try to help their covenanted brethren at home."

On hearing me speak so openly the countenance of the man brightened, and after eyeing me with a sharp scrutiny, he invited me to come down into the body of the bark, where we had some frank communion, his confidence being won by the plain tale of who I was and what I had endured.

After some general discourse, Roderick Macfarlane told me, that his vessel, though seemingly only for traffic, had been hired by a certain Madam Smith in Amsterdam, and was manned by Highlanders of a degree above the common, for the purpose of opening a correspondence between Argyle and his friends in Scotland. Whereupon I proffered myself to assist in establishing a communication with the heads and leaders of the Covenanters in the West Country, and particularly with Mr. Renwick and his associates, the Cameronians, who, though grievously scattered and hunted, were yet able to do great things in the way of conveying letters, or of intercepting the emissaries and agents of the Privy Council that might be employed to contravene the Earl's project.

As the spring advanced, being, in the manner related, engaged in furthering the purposes of the exiled Covenanters, I prepared, through the instrumentality of divers friends, many in the West Country to be in readiness to join the Earl's standard of deliverance. It is not, however, to be disguised, that the work went on but slowly, and that the people heard of the intended descent with something like an actionless wonderment, in consequence of those by whom it had been planned not sending forth any declaration of their views and intents. And this indisposition, especially among the Cameronians, became a settled reluctance, when, after the Earl had reached Campbelton,

he published that purposeless proclamation, wherein, though the wrongs and woes of the kingdom were pithily recited, the nature of the redress proposed was in no manner manifest. It was plain indeed, by many signs, that the Lord's time was not yet come for the work to thrive.

Sir John Cochrane, one of those who were with Argyle, had, by some espial of his own, a correspondence with divers of the Covenanters in the shire of Ayr; and he was so heartened by their representations of the spirit among them, that he urged, and overcame the Earl, to let him make a trial on that coast before waiting till the Highlanders were roused. Accordingly, with the three ships and the men they had brought from Holland, he went toward Largs, famed in old time for a great battle fought there; but, on arriving opposite to the shore, he found it guarded by the powers and forces of the government, in so much, that he was fain to direct his course farther up the river; and weighing anchor sailed for Greenock.

It happened at this juncture, after conferring with several of weight among the Cameronians, that I went to Greenock for the purpose of taking shipping for any place where I was likely to find Argyle, in order to represent to him, that, unless there was a clear account of what he and others with him proposed to do, he could expect no co-operation from the societies; and I reached the town just as the three ships were coming in sight.

I had not well alighted from my horse at Dugal M'Vicar the smith's public,—the best house it is in the town, and slated. It stands beside an oak tree on the open shore, below the Mansion-house-brae, above the place where the mariners boil their tar-pots. As I was saying, I had not well alighted there, when a squadron of certain time-serving and prelatic-inclined heritors of the shire of Renfrew, under the command of Houston of that ilk, came galloping to the town as if they would have devoured Argyle, host, and ships and all; and they rode straight to the minister's glebe,

where, behind the kirk-yard dyke, they set themselves in battle array with drawn swords, the vessels having in the meanwhile come to anchor forenent the kirk.

Like the men of the town I went to be an onlooker, at a distance, of what might ensue; and a sore heart it was to me, to see and to hear that the Greenock folk stood so much in dread of their superior, Sir John Shaw, that they durst not, for fear of his blackhole, venture to say that day whether they were Papists, Prelates, or Presbyterians, he himself not being in the way to direct them.

Shortly after the ships had cast anchor, Major Fullarton, with a party of some ten or twelve men, landed at the burn-foot, near the kirk, and having shown a signal for parley, Houston and his men went to him, and began to chafe and chide him for invading the country.

"We are no invaders," said the Major, "we have come to our native land to preserve the Protestant religion; and I am grieved that such brave gentlemen, as ye appear to be, should be seen in the cause of a Papist tyrant and usurper."

"Ye lee," cried Houston, and fired his pistol at the Major, the like did his men; but they were so well and quickly answered in the same language, that they soon were obligated to flee like drift to the brow of a hill, called Kilblain-brae, where they again showed face.

Those on board the ships seeing what was thus doing on the land, pointed their great guns to the airt where the cavaliers had rallied, and fired them with such effect, that the stoure and stones brattled about the lugs of the heritors, which so terrified them all that they scampered off; and, it is said, some drew not bridle till they were in Paisley with whole skins, though at some cost of leather.

When these tyrant tools were thus discomfited, Sir John Cochrane came on shore, and tried in vain to prevail on the inhabitants to join in defence of religion and liberty. So he sent for the baron-bailie, who was the ruling power of the town in the absence of their great Sir John, and ordered

him to provide forthwith two hundred bolls of meal for the ships. But the bailie, a shrewd and gausie man, made so many difficulties the gathering of the meal, to waste time till help would come that the knight was glad to content himself with little more than a fifth part of his demand.

Meanwhile I had made my errand known to Sir John Cochrane, and when he went off with the meal-sacks to the ships I went with him, and we sailed the same night to the castle of Allengreg, where Argyle himself then was.

Whatever doubts and fears I had of the success of the expedition, were all wofully confirmed, when I saw how things were about that unfortunate nobleman. The controversies in our councils at the Pentland raid were more than renewed among those who were around Argyle; and it was plain to me that the sense of ruin was upon his spirit; for, after I had told him the purport of my mission, he said to me in a mournful manner—

"I can discern no party in this country that desire to be relieved; there are some hidden ones no doubt, but only my poor friends here in Argyle seem willing to be free. God hath so ordered it, and it must be for the best. I submit myself to His will."

I felt the truth of what he said, that the tyranny had indeed bred distrust among us, and that the patience of men was so worn out that very many were inclined to submit from mere weariness of spirit;——but I added, to hearten him, if one of my condition may say so proud a thing of so great a person, That were the distinct ends of his intents made more clearly manifest, maybe the dispersed hearts of the Covenanters would yet be knit together. "Some think, my Lord, ye're for the Duke of Monmouth to be king, but that will ne'er do,—the rightful heirs canna be set aside. James Stuart may be, and should be, put down; but, according to the customs registered, as I hae read in the ancient chronicles of this realm, when our

nation in olden times cut off a king for his misdeeds, the next lawful heir was ay raised to the throne."

To this the Earl made no answer, but continued some time thoughtful, and then said—

"It rests not all with me,—those who are with me, as you may well note, take over much upon them, and will not be controlled. They are like the waves, raised and driven wheresoever any blast of rumour wiseth them to go. I gave a letter of trust to one of their emissaries, and, like the raven, he has never returned. If, however, I could get to Inverary, I doubt not yet that something might be done; for I should then be in the midst of some that would reverence Argyle."

But why need I dwell on these melancholious incidents? Next day the Earl resolved to make the attempt to reach Inverary, and I went with him: but after the castle of Arkinglass, in the way thither, had been taken, he was obligated, by the appearance of two English frigates which had been sent in pursuit of the expedition, to return to Allengreg; for the main stores and ammunition brought from Holland were lodged in that castle; the ships also were lying there; all which in a manner were at stake, and no garrison adequate to defend the same from so great a power.

On returning to Allengreg, Argyle saw it would be a golden achievement, if in that juncture he could master the frigates; so he ordered his force, which amounted to about a thousand men, to man the ships and four prizes which he had, together with about thirty cowan boats belonging to his vassals, and to attack the frigates. But in this also he was disappointed, for those who were with him, and wedded to the purpose of going to the Lowlands, mutinied against the scheme as too hazardous, and obliged him to give up the attempt, and to leave the castle with a weak and incapable garrison.

Accordingly, reluctant, but yielding to these blind coun-

cils, after quitting Allengreg, we marched for the Lowlands, and at the head of the Gareloch, where we halted, the garrison which had been left at Allengreg joined us with the disastrous intelligence, that, finding themselves unable to withstand the frigates, they had abandoned all.

I was near to Argyle when the news of this was brought to him, and I observed that he said nothing, but his cheek faded, and he hastily wrung his hands.

Having crossed the river Leven a short way above Dumbarton, without suffering any material molestation, we halted for the night. But as we were setting our watches a party of the government force appeared, so that, instead of getting any rest after our heavy march, we were obligated to think of again moving.

The Earl would fain have fought with that force, his numbers being superior, but he was again over-ruled; so that all we could do was, during the night, leaving our camp-fires burning for a delusion, to make what haste we could toward Glasgow.

In this the uncountenanced fortunes of the expedition were again seen. Our guides in the dark misled us; so that, instead of being taken to Glasgow, we were, after grievous traversing in the moors, landed on the banks of the Clyde near Kilpatrick, where the whole force broke up, Sir John Cochrane, being fey for the West Country, persuading many to go with him over the water, in order to make for the shire of Ayr.

The Earl seeing himself thus deserted, and but few besides those of his own kin left with him, rode about a mile on towards Glasgow, with the intent of taking some rest in the house of one who had been his servant; but on reaching the door it was shut in his face, and barred, and admission peremptorily refused. He said nothing, but turned round to us with a smile of such resigned sadness that it brought tears into every eye.

Seeing that his fate was come to such extremity, I pro-

posed to exchange clothes with him, that he might the better escape, and to conduct him to the West Country, where, if any chance were yet left, it was to be found there, as Sir John Cochrane had represented. Whereupon he sent his kinsmen to make the best of their way back to the Highlands, to try what could be done among his clan; and having accepted a portion of my apparel, he went to the ferry-boat with Major Fullarton, and we crossed the water together.

On landing on the Renfew side the Earl went forward alone, a little before the Major and me; but on reaching the ford at Inchinnan he was stopped by two soldiers, who laid hands upon him, one on each side, and in the grappling one of them the Earl fell to the ground. In a moment, however, his Lordship started up, and got rid of them by presenting his pistols. But five others at the same instant came in sight, and fired and ran in at him, and knocked him down with their swords. "Alas! unfortunate Argyle," I heard him cry as he fell: and the soldiers were so astonished at having so rudely treated so great a man, that they stood still with awe and dropped their swords, and some of them shed tears of sorrow for his fate.

Seeing what had thus happened, Major Fullarton and I fled and hid ourselves behind a hedge, for we saw another party of troopers coming towards the spot,—we heard afterwards that it was Sir John Shaw of Greenock, with some of the Renfrewshire heritors, by whom the Earl was conducted a prisoner to Glasgow. But of the dismal indignities, and degradations to which he was subjected, and of his doleful martyrdom, the courteous reader may well spare me the sad recital, as they are recorded in all British histories.

—John Galt, *Ringan Gilhaize.*

XXIII

Plotting for the Stuarts

WHILE the Prince of Orange was at Salisbury, there came a troop of dragoons with orange scarfs, and quartered in Castlewood, and some of them came up to the Hall, where they took possession, robbing nothing however beyond the hen-house and the beer-cellar; and only insisting upon going through the house and looking for papers.

The family were away more than six months, and when they returned they were in the deepest state of dejection, for King James had been banished, the Prince of Orange was on the throne, and the direst persecutions of those of the Catholic faith were apprehended by my Lady, who said she did not believe that there was a word of truth in the promises of toleration that Dutch monster made, or in a single word the perjured wretch said. My Lord and Lady were in a manner prisoners in their own house; so her Ladyship gave the little page to know, who was by this time growing of an age to understand what was passing about him, and something of the characters of the people he lived with.

"We are prisoners," says she; "in everything but chains we are prisoners. Let them come, let them consign me to dungeons, or strike off my head from this poor little throat" (and she clasped it in her long fingers). "The blood of the Esmonds will always flow freely for their kings. We are not like the Churchills—the Judases, who kiss their master and betray him. We know how to suffer, how even

to forgive in the royal cause" (no doubt it was that fatal business of losing the place of Groom of the Posset to which her Ladyship alluded, as she did half a dozen times in the day). "Let the tyrant of Orange bring his rack and his odious Dutch tortures—the beast! the wretch! I spit upon him and defy him. Cheerfully will I lay this head upon the block; cheerfully will I accompany my Lord to the scaffold: we will cry, 'God save King James!' with our dying breath, and smile in the face of the executioner." And she told her page, a hundred times at least, of the particulars of the last interview which she had with His Majesty.

"I flung myself before my liege's feet," she said, "at Salisbury. I devoted myself—my husband—my house, to his cause. Perhaps he remembered old times, when Isabella Esmond was young and fair; perhaps he recalled the day when 'twas not *I* that knelt—at least he spoke to me with a voice that reminded *me* of days gone by. 'Egad!' said His Majesty, 'you should go to the Prince of Orange if you want anything.' 'No, sire,' I replied, 'I would not kneel to a Usurper; the Esmond that would have served your Majesty will never be groom to a traitor's posset.' The royal exile smiled, even in the midst of his misfortune; he deigned to raise me with words of consolation. The Viscount, my husband, himself, could not be angry at the august salute with which he honoured me!"

The public misfortune had the effect of making my Lord and his Lady better friends than they ever had been since their courtship. My Lord Viscount had shown both loyalty and spirit when these were rare qualities in the dispirited party about the King; and the praise he got elevated him not a little in his wife's good opinion, and perhaps in his own. He wakened up from the listless and supine life which he had been leading; was always riding to and fro in consultation with this friend or that of the

King's; the page of course knowing little of his doings, but remarking only his greater cheerfulness and altered demeanour.

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated no longer openly as chaplain; he was always fetching and carrying: strangers, military and ecclesiastic, were continually arriving and departing. My Lord made long absences and sudden reappearances, using sometimes the means of exit which Father Holt had employed, though how often the little window in the chaplain's room let in or let out my Lord and his friends, no one could tell.

No garrison or watch was put into Castlewood when my Lord came back, but a guard was in the village; and one or other of them was always on the Green keeping a look-out on our great gate, and those who went out and in. Lockwood said that at night especially every person who came in or went out was watched by the outlying sentries. 'Twas lucky that we had a gate which their worships knew nothing about. My Lord and Father Holt must have made constant journeys at night: once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger and discreet aide-de-camp. He remembers he was bidden to go into the village with his fishing-rod, enter certain houses, ask for a drink of water, and tell the good man, "There would be a horse-market at Newbury next Thursday," and so carry the same message on to the next house on his list.

He did not know what the message meant at the time, nor what was happening: which may as well, however, for clearness' sake, be explained here. The Prince of Orange being gone to Ireland, where the King was ready to meet him with a great army, it was determined that a great rising of His Majesty's party should take place in this country; and my Lord was to head the force in our county. Of late, he had taken a greater lead in affairs than before, having the indefatigable Mr. Holt at his elbow, and my Lady Viscountess strongly urging him on; and my Lord

"Once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger."

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Sark being in the Tower a prisoner, and Sir Wilmot Crawley, of Queen's Crawley, having gone over to the Prince of Orange's side—my Lord became the most considerable person in our part of the county for the affairs of the King.

It was arranged that the regiment of Scots Greys and Dragoons, then quartered at Newbury, should declare for the King on a certain day, when likewise the gentry affected to His Majesty's cause were to come in with their tenants and adherents to Newbury, march upon the Dutch troops at Reading under Ginckel; and, these overthrown, and their indomitable little master away in Ireland, 'twas thought that our side might move on London itself, and a confident victory was predicted for the King.

As these great matters were in agitation, my Lord lost his listless manner and seemed to gain health; my Lady did not scold him, Mr. Holt came to and fro, busy always; and little Harry longed to have been a few inches taller, that he might draw a sword in this good cause.

One day, it must have been about the month of June, 1690, my Lord, in a great horseman's coat, under which Harry could see the shining of a steel breastplate he had on, called little Harry to him, put the hair off the child's forehead, and kissed him, and bade God bless him in such an affectionate way as he never had used before. Father Holt blessed him too, and then they took leave of my Lady Viscountess, who came from her apartment with a pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, and her gentlewoman and Mrs. Tusher supporting her. "You are going to—to ride," says she. "Oh, that I might come to!—but in my situation I am forbidden horse exercise."

"We kiss my Lady Marchioness's hand,'" says Mr. Holt.

"My Lord, God speed you!" she said, stepping up and embracing my Lord in a grand manner. "Mr. Holt, I ask your blessing"; and she knelt down for that, whilst Mrs. Tusher tossed her head up.

Mr. Holt gave the same benediction to the little page, who went down and held my Lord's stirrups for him to mount; there were two servants waiting there too—and they rode out of Castlewood gate.

As they crossed the bridge, Harry could see an officer in scarlet ride up touching his hat, and address my Lord.

The party stopped, and came to some parley or discussion, which presently ended, my Lord putting his horse into a canter after taking off his hat and making a bow to the officer, who rode along side him step for step: the trooper accompanying him falling back, and riding with my Lord's two men. They cantered over the Green, and behind the elms (my Lord waving his hand, Harry thought), and so they disappeared. That evening we had a great panic, the cow-boy coming at milking-time riding one of our horses, which he had found grazing at the outer park-wall.

All night my Lady Viscountess was in a very quiet and subdued mood. She scarce found fault with anybody; she played at cards for six hours; little page Esmond went to sleep. He prayed for my Lord and the good cause before closing his eyes.

It was quite in the grey of the morning when the porter's bell rang, and old Lockwood, waking up, let in one of my Lord's servants, who had gone with him in the morning, and who returned with a melancholy story. The officer who rode up to my Lord had, it appeared, said to him, that it was his duty to inform his Lordship that he was not under arrest, but under surveillance, and to request him not to ride abroad that day.

My Lord replied that riding was good for his health, that if the Captain chose to accompany him he was welcome; and it was then that he made a bow, and they cantered away together.

When he came on to Wansey Down, my Lord all of a sudden pulled up, and the party came to a halt at the cross-way.

"Sir," says he to the officer, "we are four to two: will you be so kind as to take that road, and leave me to go mine?"

"Your road is mine, my Lord," says the officer.

"Then ——" says my Lord; but he had no time to say more, for the officer, drawing a pistol, snapped it at his Lordship; as at the same moment, Father Holt, drawing a pistol, shot the officer through the head. It was done, and the man dead in an instant of time. The orderly, gazing at the officer, looked scared for a moment, and galloped away for his life.

"Fire! fire!" cries out Father Holt, sending another shot after the trooper, but the two servants were too much surprised to use their pieces, and my Lord calling to them to hold their hands, the fellow got away.

"Mr. Holt, *qui pensit à tout*," says Blaise, "gets off his horse, examines the pockets of the dead officer for papers, gives his money to us two, and says, 'The wine is drawn, M. le Marquis,'—why did he say Marquis to M. le Vicomte?—'we must drink it.'"

"The poor gentleman's horse was a better one than that I rode," Blaise continues: "Mr. Holt bids me get on him, and so I gave a cut to Whitefoot, and she trotted home. We rode on towards Newbury; we heard firing towards midday; at two o'clock a horseman comes up to us as we were giving our cattle water at an inn—and says, 'All is done! The Ecossais declared an hour too soon—General Ginckle was down upon them.' The whole thing was at an end."

"'And we've shot an officer on duty, and let his orderly escape,' says my Lord."

"'Blaise', says Mr. Holt, writing two lines on his table-book, one for my lady, and one for you, Master Harry; 'you must go back to Castlewood, and deliver these,' and behold me."

And he gave Harry the two papers. He read that to

himself, which only said, "Burn the papers in the cupboard, burn this. You know nothing about anything." Harry read this, ran upstairs to his mistress's apartment, where her gentlewoman slept near to the door, made her bring a light and wake my Lady, into whose hands he gave the paper. She was a wonderful object to look at in her night attire, nor had Harry ever seen the like.

As soon as she had the paper in her hand, Harry stepped back to the Chaplain's room, opened the secret cupboard over the fireplace, burned all the papers in it, and, as he had seen the priest do before, took down one of his reverence's manuscript sermons, and half-burnt that in the brazier. By the time the papers were quite destroyed it was daylight. Harry ran back to his mistress again. Her gentlewoman ushered him again into her Ladyship's chamber: she told him (from behind her nuptial curtains) to bid the coach be got ready, and that she would ride away anon.

But the mysteries of her Ladyship's toilet were as awfully long on this day as on any other, and, long after the coach was ready, my Lady was still attiring herself. And just as the Viscountess stepped forth from her room, ready for departure, young John Lockwood comes running up from the village with news that a lawyer, three officers, and twenty or four-and-twenty soldiers, were marching thence upon the house. John had but two minutes the start of them, and, ere he had well told his story, the troop rode into our courtyard.

At first my Lady was for dying like Mary Queen of Scots (to whom she fancied she bore a resemblance in beauty), and, stroking her scraggy neck, said, "They will find Isabel of Castlewood is equal to her fate." Her gentlewoman, Victoire, persuaded her that her prudent course was, as she could not fly, to receive the troops as though she suspected nothing, and that her chamber was the best place wherein to await them. So her black Japan casket, which Harry

was to carry to the coach, was taken back to her Ladyship's chamber, whither the maid and mistress retired. Victoire came out presently, bidding the page to say her Ladyship was ill, confined to her bed with the rheumatism.

By this time the soldiers had reached Castlewood. Harry Esmond saw them from the window of the tapestry parlour: a couple of sentinels were posted at the gate—a half-dozen more walked towards the stable; and some others, preceded by their commander, and a man in black, a lawyer probably, were conducted by one of the servants to the stair leading up to the part of the house which my Lord and Lady inhabited.

So the Captain, a handsome kind man, and the lawyer, came through the ante-room to the tapestry parlour, and where now was nobody but young Harry Esmond the page.

"Tell your mistress, little man," says the Captain kindly, "that we must speak to her."

"My mistress is ill a-bed," said the page.

"What complaint has she?" asked the Captain.

The boy said, "The rheumatism."

"Rheumatism! that's a sad complaint," continues the good-natured Captain; "and the coach is in the yard to fetch the Doctor, I suppose?"

"I don't know," says the boy.

"And how long has her Ladyship been ill?"

"I don't know," says the boy.

"When did my Lord go away?"

"Yesterday night."

"With Father Holt?"

"With Mr. Holt."

"And which way did they travel?" asks the lawyer.

"They travelled without me," says the page.

"We must see Lady Castlewood."

"I have orders that nobody goes in to her Ladyship —she is sick," says the page; but at this moment Victoire

came out. "Hush!" says she; and, as if not knowing that any one was near, "What's this noise?" says she. "Is this gentleman the Doctor?"

"Stuff! we must see Lady Castlewood," says the lawyer, pushing by.

"The curtains of her Ladyship's room were down, and the chamber dark, and she was in bed with a nightcap on her head, and propped up by her pillows, looking none the less ghastly because of the red which was still on her cheeks, and which she could not afford to forego.

"Is that the Doctor?" she said.

"There is no use with this deception, madam," Captain Westbury said (for so he was named). "My duty is to arrest the person of Thomas, Viscount Castlewood, a nonjuring peer—of Robert Tusher, Vicar of Castlewood—and Henry Holt, known under various other names and designations, a Jesuit priest, who officiated as chaplain here in the late King's time, and is now at the head of the conspiracy which was about to break out in this country against the authority of their Majesties King William and Queen Mary—and my orders are to search the house for such papers or traces of the conspiracy as may be found here. Your Ladyship will please to give me your keys, and it will be as well for yourself that you should help us, in every way, in our search."

"You see, sir, that I have the rheumatism, and cannot move," said the lady, looking uncommonly ghastly, as she sat up in her bed, where, however, she had had her cheeks painted, and a new cap put on, so that she might at least look her best when the officers came.

"I shall take leave to place a sentinel in the chamber, so that your Ladyship, in case you should wish to rise, may have an arm to lean on," Captain Westbury said. "Your woman will show me where I am to look;" and Madame Victoire, chattering in her half French and half English jargon, opened while the Captain examined one drawer

after another; but, as Harry Esmond thought, rather carelessly, with a smile on his face, as if he was only conducting the examination for form's sake.

"Madame, if you are to ill to leave the bed," the Captain then said, rather sternly, "I must have in four of my men to lift you off in the sheet. I must examine this bed, in a word; papers may be hidden in a bed as elsewhere; we know that very well, and——"

Here it was her Ladyship's turn to shriek, for the Captain, with his fist shaking the pillows and bolsters, at last came to "burn" as they say in the play of forfeits, and wrenching away one of the pillows, said, "Look! did not I tell you so? Here is a pillow stuffed with paper."

"Some villain has betrayed us," cried out my Lady, sitting up in the bed, showing herself full dressed under her night-rail.

"And now your Ladyship can move, I am sure; permit me to give you my hand to rise. You will have to travel for some distance, as far as Hexton Castle, to-night. Will you have your coach? Your woman shall attend you if you like—and the Japan box!"

"Sir! you don't strike a *man* when he is down," said my Lady, with some dignity: "can you not spare a woman?"

"Your Ladyship must please to rise, and let me search the bed," said the Captain: "there is no more time to lose inbandying talk."

And, without more ado, the gaunt old woman got up. Harry Esmond recollected to the end of his life that figure with the brocade dress and the white night rail, and the gold-clocked red stockings, and white red-heeled shoes, sitting up in the bed and stepping down from it. The trunks were ready packed for departure in her ante-room, and the horses ready harnessed in the stable: about all which the Captain seemed to know, by information got from some quarter or other; and whence Esmond could make

a pretty shrewd guess in after-times, when Doctor Tusher complained that King William's government had basely treated him for services done in that cause.

And here he may relate, though he was then too young to know all that was happening, what the papers contained, of which Captain Westbury had made a seizure, and which papers had been transferred from the Japan box to the bed when the officers arrived.

There was a list of gentleman of the county in Father Holt's handwriting—Mr. Freeman's (King James's) friends —a similar paper being found among those of Sir John Fenwick and Mr. Coplestone, who suffered death for this conspiracy.

There was a patent conferring the title of Marquis of Esmond on my Lord Castlewood and the heirs-male of his body; his appointment as Lord Lieutenant of the County, and Major-General.

The seizure of the papers effected, the gentlemen did not pursue their further search through Castlewood House very rigorously. They examined Mr. Holt's room, being led thither by his pupil, who showed, as the Father had bidden him, the place where the key of his chamber lay, opened the door for the gentlemen, and conducted them into the room.

When the gentleman came to the half burned papers in the brazier, they examined them eagerly enough, and their young guide was a little amused at their perplexity.

"What are these?" says one.

"They're written in a foreign language," says the lawyer. "What are you laughing at, little whelp?" adds he, turning round as he saw the boy smile.

"Mr. Holt said they were sermons," Harry said, "and bade me to burn them;" which indeed was true of those papers.

"Sermons, indeed!—it's treason, I would lay a wager," cries the lawyer.

"Egad! it's Greek to me," says Captain Westbury. "Can you read it, little boy?"

"Yes, sir, a little," Harry said.

"Then read, and read in English, sir, on your peril," said the lawyer. And Harry began to translate:—

"'Hath not one of your own writers said, "The children of Adam are now labouring as much as he himself ever did, about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, shaking the boughs thereof, and seeking the fruit, being for the most part unmindful of the tree of life." O blind generation! 'tis this tree of knowledge to which the serpent has led you'"—and here the boy was obliged to stop, the rest of the page being charred by the fire: and asked of the lawyer, "Shall I go on, sir?"

The lawyer said, "This boy is deeper than he seems: who knows that he is not laughing at us?"

"Let's have in Dick the Scholar," cried Captain Westbury, laughing: and he called to a trooper out of the window—"Ho, Dick! come in here and construe."

A thick-set soldier, with a square good-humoured face, came in at the summons, saluting his officer.

"Tell us what is this, Dick," says the lawyer.

"My name is Steele, sir," says the soldier. "I may be Dick for my friends, but I don't name gentleman of your cloth amongst them."

"Well then, Steele."

"Mr. Steele, sir, if you please. When you address a gentleman of His Majesty's Horse Guards, be pleased not to be so familiar."

"I didn't know, sir," said the lawyer.

"How should you? I take it you are not accustomed to meet with gentlemen," says the trooper.

'Hold thy prate, and read that bit of paper," says Westbury.

"'Tis Latin," says Dick, glancing at it, and again saluting his officer, "and from a sermon of Mr. Cudworth's;" and

he translated the words pretty much as Henry Esmond had rendered them.

"What a young scholar you are!" says the Captain to the boy.

"Depend on't, he knows more than he tells," says the lawyer. "I think we will pack him off in the coach with old Jezebel."

"For construing a bit of Latin?" said the Captain, very good-naturedly.

"I would as lief go there as anywhere," Harry Esmond said simply, "for there is nobody to care for me."

There must have been something touching in the child's voice, or in this description of his solitude—for the Captain looked at him very good-naturedly, and the trooper called Steele put his hand kindly on the lad's head, and said some words in the Latin tongue.

The horses were by this time harnessed to the coach; and the Countess and Victoire came down and were put into the vehicle.

So then my Lady was consigned to her coach, and sent off to Hexton, with her woman and the man of law to bear her company, a couple of troopers riding on either side of the coach. And Harry was left behind at the Hall, belonging as it were to nobody, and quite alone in the world. The captain and a guard of men remained in possession there; and the soldiers, who were very good-natured and kind, ate my Lord's mutton and drank his wine, and made themselves comfortable, as they well might do in such pleasant quarters.

The captains had their dinner served in my Lord's tapestry parlour, and poor little Harry thought his duty was to wait upon Captain Westbury's chair, as his custom had been to serve his Lord when he sat there.

After the departure of the Countess, Dick the Scholar took Harry Esmond under his special protection, and would examine him in his humanities, and talk to him both

of French and Latin, in which tongues the lad found, and his new friend was willing enough to acknowledge, that he was even more proficient than Scholar Dick. Hearing that he had learned them from a Jesuit, in the praise of whom and whose goodness Harry was never tired of speaking, Dick, rather to the boy's surprise, who began to have an early shrewdness, like many children bred up alone, showed a great deal of theological science, and knowledge of the points at issue between the two Churches: so that he and Harry would have hours of controversy together, in which the boy was certainly worsted by the arguments of this singular trooper. "I am no common soldier," Dick would say, and indeed it was easy to see by his learning, breeding, and many accomplishments, that he was not. "I am of one of the most ancient families in the empire; I have had my education at a famous school, and a famous university; I learned my first rudiments of Latin near to Smithfield, in London, where the martyrs were roasted."

"You hanged as many of ours," interposed Harry; "and, for the matter of persecution, Father Holt told me that a young gentleman of Edinburgh, eighteen years of age, student at the college there, was hanged for heresy only last year, though he recanted, and solemnly asked pardon for his errors."

"Faith! there has been too much persecution on both sides: but 'twas you taught us."

"Nay, 'twas the Pagans began it," cried the lad, and began to instance a number of saints of the Church, from the Proto-martyr downwards—"this one's fire went out under him: that one's oil cooled in the cauldron: at a third holy head the executioner chopped three times and it would not come off. Show us martyrs in *your* Church for whom such miracles have been done."

"Nay," says the trooper gravely, "the miracles of the last three centuries belong to my Church as well as yours, Master Papist."

"You seem very good," the boy said.

"I'm not what I seem, alas!" answered the trooper—and indeed, as it turned out, poor Dick told the truth—for that very night, at supper in the hall, where the gentlemen of the troop took their repasts, and passed most part of their days dicing and smoking of tobacco, and singing and cursing, over the Castlewood ale—Harry Esmond found Dick the Scholar in a woeful state of drunkenness. He hiccupped out a sermon; and his laughing companions bade him sing a hymn, on which Dick, swearing he would run the scoundrel through the body who insulted his religion, made for his sword, which was hanging on the wall, and fell down flat on the floor under it, saying to Harry, who ran forward to help him, "Ah, little Papist, I wish Joseph Addison was here!"

Though the troopers of the King's Life Guards were all gentlemen, yet the rest of the gentlemen seemed ignorant and vulgar boors to Harry Esmond, with the exception of this good-natured Corporal Steele the Scholar, and Captain Westbury and Lieutenant Trant, who were always kind to the lad. They remained for some weeks or months encamped in Castlewood, and Harry learned from them, from time to time, how the lady at Hexton Castle was treated, and the particulars of her confinement there. 'Tis known that King William was disposed to deal very leniently with the gentry who remained faithful to the old King's cause; and no prince usurping a crown, as his enemies said he did (righteously taking it, as I think now), ever caused less blood to be shed. As for women conspirators, he kept spies on the least dangerous, and locked up the others. Lady Castlewood had the best rooms in Hexton Castle, and the gaoler's garden to walk in; and though she repeatedly desired to be led out to execution, like Mary Queen of Scots, there never was any thought of taking her painted old head off, or any desire to do aught but keep her person in security.

What happened to my Lord may be briefly told here. Having found the horses at the place where they were lying, my Lord and Father Holt rode together to Chatteris, where they had temporary refuge with one of the Father's penitents in that city: but the pursuit being hot for them, and the reward for the apprehension of one or the other considerable, it was deemed advisable that they should separate; and the priest betook himself to other places of retreat known to him, whilst my Lord passed over from Bristol into Ireland, in which kingdom King James had a court and an army. My Lord was but a small addition to this; bringing, indeed, only his sword and a few pieces in his pocket; but the King received him with some kindness and distinction in spite of his poor plight, confirmed him in his new title of Marquis, gave him a regiment, and promised him further promotion. But title or promotion were not to benefit him now. My Lord was wounded at the fatal battle of the Boyne, flying from which field (long after his master had set him an example) he lay for a while concealed in the marshy country near to the town of Trim, and more from catarrh and fever caught in the bogs than from the steel of the enemy in the battle, sank and died.

—W. M. THACKERAY, *Esmond.*

XXIV

The Passing of the Crown from the Stuarts

SHOULD any clue be found to the dark intrigues at the latter end of Queen Anne's time, or any historian be inclined to follow it, 'twill be discovered, I have little doubt, that not one of the great personages about the Queen had a defined scheme of policy, independent of that private and selfish interest which each was bent on pursuing: St. John was for St. John, and Harley for Oxford, and Marlborough for John Churchill, always; and according as they could get help from St. Germains or Hanover, they sent over proffers of allegiance to the princes there, or betrayed one to the other: one cause, or one sovereign, was as good as another to them, so that they could hold the best place under him; and, like Lockit and Peachum, the Newgate chiefs in the "Rogues' Opera" Mr. Gay wrote afterwards, had each in his hand documents and proofs of treason which would hang the other, only he did not dare to use the weapon, for fear of that one which his neighbour also carried in his pocket. Think of the great Marlborough, the greatest subject in all the world, a conqueror of princes, that had marched victorious over Germany, Flanders, and France, that had given the law to sovereigns abroad, and been worshipped as a divinity at home, forced to sneak out of England—his credit, honours, places, all taken from him; his friends in the army broke and ruined; and flying before Harley, as abject and powerless as a poor debtor

before a bailiff with a writ. A paper, of which Harley got possession, and showing beyond doubt that the Duke was engaged with the Stuart family, was the weapon with which the Treasurer drove Marlborough out of the Kingdom. He fled to Antwerp, and began intriguing instantly on the other side, and came back to England, as all know, a Whig and a Hanoverian.

Though the Treasurer turned out of the army and office every man, military or civil, known to be the Duke's friend, and gave the vacant posts among the Tory party; he, too, was playing the double game between Hanover and St. Germains, awaiting the expected catastrophe of the Queen's death to be Master of the State, and offer it to either family that should bribe him best, or that the nation should declare for. Whichever the King was, Harley's object was to reign over him; and to this end he supplanted the former famous favourite, decried the actions of the war which had made Marlborough's name illustrious, and disdained no more than the great fallen competitor of his, the meanest arts, flatteries, intimidations, that would secure his power. If the greatest satirist the world ever hath seen had writ against Harley, and not for him, what a history had he left behind of the last years of Queen Anne's reign! But Swift, that scorned all mankind, and himself not the least of all, had this merit of a faithful partisan, that he loved those chiefs who treated him well, and stuck by Harley bravely in his fall, as he gallantly had supported him in his better fortune.

Incomparably more brilliant, more splendid, eloquent, accomplished than his rival, the great St. John could be as selfish as Oxford was, and could act the double part as skilfully as ambidextrous Churchill. He whose talk was always of liberty, no more shrank from using persecution and the pillory against his opponents than if he had been at Lisbon and Grand Inquisitor. This lofty patriot was on his knees at Hanover and St. Germains too; notoriously of

no religion, he toasted Church and Queen as boldly as the stupid Sacheverel, whom he used and laughed at; and to serve his turn, and to overthrow his enemy, he could intrigue, coax, bully, wheedle, fawn on the Court favourite, and creep up the backstair as silently as Oxford, who supplanted Marlborough, and whom he himself supplanted. The crash of my Lord Oxford happened at this very time whereat my History begins. He was come to the very last days of his power, and the agent whom he employed to overthrow the conqueror of Blenheim, was now engaged to upset the conqueror's conqueror, and hand over the staff of government to Bolingbroke, who had been panting to hold it.

In expectation of the stroke that was now preparing, the Irish regiments in the French service were all brought round about Boulogne in Picardy, to pass over if need were with the Duke of Berwick; the soldiers of France no longer, but subjects of James the Third of England and Ireland King. The fidelity of the great mass of the Scots (though a most active, resolute, and gallant Whig party, admirably and energetically ordered and disciplined, was known to be in Scotland too) was notoriously unshaken in their King. A very great body of Tory clergy, nobility, and gentry, were public partisans of the exiled Prince; and the indifferents might be counted on to cry King George or King James, according as either should prevail. The Queen, especially in her latter days, inclined towards her own family. The Prince was lying actually in London, within a stone's-cast of his sister's palace; the first Minister toppling to his fall, and so tottering that the weakest push of a woman's finger would send him down; and as for Bolingbroke, his successor, we know on whose side his power and his splendid eloquence would be on the day when the Queen should appear openly before her Council and say:—"This, my Lords, is my brother; here is my father's heir, and mine after me."

During the whole of the previous year the Queen had had many and repeated fits of sickness, fever, and lethargy, and her death had been constantly looked for by all her attendants. The Elector of Hanover had wished to send his son, the Duke of Cambridge—to pay his court to his cousin the Queen, the Elector said:—in truth, to be on the spot when death should close her career. Frightened perhaps to have such a *memento mori* under her royal eyes, Her Majesty had angrily forbidden the young Prince's coming into England. Either she desired to keep the chances for her brother open yet; or the people about her did not wish to close with the Whig candidate till they could make terms with him. The quarrels of her Ministers before her face at the Council board, the pricks of conscience very likely, the importunities of her Ministers, and constant turmoil and agitation round about her, had weakened and irritated the Princess extremely; her strength was giving way under these continual trials of her temper, and from day to day it was expected she must come to a speedy end of them.

Viscount Castlewood and his companion came from France, just before Her Majesty was taken ill. The St. Anthony's fire broke out on the Royal legs; there was no hurry for the presentation of the young lord at Court, or that person who should appear under his name; and my Lord Viscount's wound breaking out opportunely, he was kept conveniently in his chamber until such time as his physician would allow him to bend his knee before the Queen. At the commencement of July that influential lady, with whom our party had relations, came frequently to visit her young friend the Maid of Honour at Kensington, and my Lord Viscount (the real or supposititious), who was an invalid at Lady Castlewood's house.

On the 27th day of July, the lady in question, who held the most intimate post about the Queen, came in her chair from the Palace hard by, bringing to the little party in

Kensington Square intelligence of the very highest importance. The final blow had been struck, and my Lord of Oxford and Mortimer was no longer Treasurer. The staff was as yet given to no successor, though my Lord Bolingbroke would undoubtedly be the man. And now the time was come, the Queen's Abigail said: and now my Lord Castlewood ought to be presented to the Sovereign.

The Court lady with whom our plan was concerted, and who was a chief agent in it, the Court physician and the Bishop of Rochester, who were the other two most active participators in our plan, had held many councils, in our house at Kensington and elsewhere, as to the means best to be adopted for presenting our young prince to his sister the Queen. The simple and easy plan proposed by Colonel Esmond had been agreed to by all parties, which was that on some rather private day, when there were not many persons about the Court, the Prince should appear there as my Lord Castlewood, should be greeted by his sister-in-waiting, and led by that other lady into the closet of the Queen. And according to Her Majesty's health or humour, and the circumstances that might arise during the interview, it was to be left to the discretion of those present at it, and to the Prince himself, whether he should declare that it was the Queen's own brother, or the brother of Beatrix Esmond, who kissed her royal hand. And this plan being determined on, we were all waiting in very much anxiety for the day and signal of execution.

On the morning then of the 27th day of July, the Bishop of Rochester breakfasting with Lady Castlewood and her family, and the meal scarce over, Dr. A.'s coach drove up to our house at Kensington, and the Doctor appeared amongst the party there, enlivening a rather gloomy company; for the mother and daughter had had words in the morning in respect to transactions at supper two days ago, and other adventures perhaps, and on the day succeeding. Beatrix's haughty spirit brooked remon-

strances from no superior, much less from her mother, the gentlest of creatures, whom the girl commanded rather than obeyed. And feeling she was wrong, and that by a thousand coquetries (which she could no more help exercising on every man that came near her, than the sun can help shining on great and small) she had provoked the Prince's dangerous admiration, and allured him to the expression of it, she was only the more wilful and imperious the more she felt her error.

To this party, the Prince being served with chocolate in his bedchamber where he lay late sleeping away the fumes of his wine, the Doctor came, and by the urgent and startling nature of his news, dissipated instantly that private and minor unpleasantry under which the family of Castlewood was labouring.

He asked for the guest; the guest was above in his own apartment: he bade *Monsieur Baptiste* go up to his master instantly, and requested that *my Lord Visount Castlewood* would straightway put his uniform on, and come away in the Doctor's coach now at the door.

He then informed Madam Beatrix what her part of the comedy was to be:—"In half-an-hour," says he, "Her Majesty and her favourite lady will take the air in the Cedar Walk behind the new Banqueting House. Her Majesty will be drawn in a garden chair, Madam Beatrix Esmond and *her brother*, *my Lord Visount Castlewood*, will be walking in the private garden (here is Lady Masham's key), and will come unawares upon the royal party. The man that draws the chair will retire, and leave the Queen, the favourite, and the Maid of Honour and her brother together; Mistress Beatrix will present her brother, and then!—and then, my Lord Bishop will pray for the result of the interview, and his Scots clerk will say Amen! Quick, put on your hood, Madam Beatrix: why doth not His Majesty come down? Such another chance may not present itself for months again."

The Prince was late and lazy, and indeed had all but lost that chance through his indolence. The Queen was actually about to leave the garden just when the party reached it; the Doctor, the Bishop, the Maid of Honour, and her brother, went off together in the physician's coach and had been gone half an hour when Colonel Esmond came to Kensington Square.

In half an hour more the coach returned; the Bishop descended from it first, and gave his arm to Beatrix, who now came out. His Lordship went back into the carriage again, and the Maid of Honour entered the house alone. We were all gazing at her from the upper window, trying to read from her countenance the result of the interview from which she had just come.

She came into the drawing-room in a great tremor and very pale; she asked for a glass of water as her mother went to meet her, and after drinking that and putting off her hood, she began to speak: "We may all hope for the best," says she; "it has cost the Queen a fit. Her Majesty was in her chair in the Cedar Walk, accompanied only by Lady ——, when we entered by the private wicket from the west side of the garden, and turned towards her, the Doctor following us. They waited in a side walk hidden by the shrubs, as we advanced towards the chair. My heart throbbed so I scarce could speak; but my Prince whispered, 'Courage, Beatrix,' and marched on with a steady step. His face was a little flushed, but he was not afraid of the danger. He who fought so bravely at Malplaquet fears nothing." Esmond and Castlewood looked at each other at this compliment, neither liking the sound of it.

"The Prince uncovered," Beatrix continued, "and I saw the Queen turning round to Lady Masham, as if asking who these two were. Her Majesty looked very pale and ill, and then flushed up; the favourite made us a signal to advance, and I went up, leading my Prince by the

hand, quite close to the chair; 'Your Majesty will give my Lord Viscount your hand to kiss,' says her lady, and the Queen put out her hand, which the Prince kissed, kneeling on his knee, he who should kneel to no mortal man or woman.

"'You have been long from England, my Lord,' says the Queen; 'why were you not here to give a home to your mother and sister?'

"'I am come, madam, to stay now, if the Queen desires me,' says the Prince, with another low bow.

"'You have taken a foreign wife, my Lord, and a foreign religion; was not that of England good enough for you?'

"'In returning to my father's Church,' says the Prince, 'I do not love my mother the less, nor am I the less faithful servant of your Majesty.'

"Here," says Beaxtrix, "the favourite gave me a little signal with her hand to fall back, which I did, though I died to hear what should pass: and whispered something to the Queen, which made Her Majesty start and utter one or two words in a hurried manner, looking towards the Prince, and catching hold with her hand of the arm of her chair. He advanced still nearer towards it; he began to speak very rapidly; I caught the words, 'Father, blessing, forgiveness,' and then presently the Prince fell on his knees; took from his breast a paper he had there, handed it to the Queen, who, as soon as she saw it, flung up both her arms with a scream, and took away that hand nearest the Prince, and which he endeavoured to kiss. He went on speaking with great animation of gesture, now clasping his hands together on his heart, now opening them as though to say: 'I am here, your brother, in your power.' Lady Masham ran round on the other side of the chair, kneeling too, and speaking with great energy. She clasped the Queen's hand on her side, and picked up the paper Her Majesty had let fall. The Prince rose and made a

further speech as though he would go: the favourite on the other hand urging her mistress, and then, running back to the Prince, brought him back once more close to the chair. Again he knelt down and took the Queen's hand, which she did not withdraw, kissing it a hundred times; my Lady all the time, with sobs and supplications, speaking over the chair. This while the Queen sat with a stupefied look, crumpling the paper with one hand, as my Prince embraced the other; then of a sudden she uttered several piercing shrieks, and burst into a great fit of hysteric tears and laughter. 'Enough, enough, sir, for this time,' I heard Lady Masham say: and the chairman, who had withdrawn round the Banqueting room, came back, alarmed by the cries. 'Quick,' says Lady Masham, 'get some help,' and I ran towards the Doctor, who, with the Bishop of Rochester, came up instantly. Lady Masham whispered the Prince he might hope for the very best and to be ready to-morrow; and he hath gone away to the Bishop of Rochester's house to meet several of his friends there. And so the great stroke is struck," says Beatrix, going down on her knees, and clasping her hands. "God save the King! God save the King!"

Beatrix's tale told, and the young lady herself calmed somewhat of her agitation, we asked with regard to the Prince, who was absent with Bishop Atterbury, and were informed that 'twas likely he might remain abroad the whole day.

"We are glad," says Lady Castlewood, taking her daughter's hand, and speaking in a gentle voice, "that the guest is away."

Beatrix drew back in an instant, looking round her at us three, and as if divining a danger. "Why glad?" says she, her breast beginning to heave; "are you so soon tired of him?"

"We think one of us is devilishly too fond of him," cries out Frank Castlewood.

"And which is it—you, my Lord, or is it mamma, who is jealous because he drinks my health? or is is it the head of the family" (here she turned with an imperious look towards Colonel Esmond), "who has taken of late to preach the King sermons?"

"We do not say you are too free with His Majesty."

"I thank you, madam," says Beatrix, with a toss of the head and a curtsey.

But her mother continued, with very great calmness and dignity: "At least we have not said so, though we might, were it possible for a mother to say such words to her own daughter, your father's daughter."

"*Eh! mon père*," breaks out Beatrix, "was no better than other persons' fathers." And again she looked towards the Colonel.

We all felt a shock as she uttered those two or three French words; her manner was exactly imitated from that of our foreign guest.

"You had not learned to speak French a month ago, Beatrix," says her mother sadly, "nor to speak ill of your father."

Beatrix, no doubt, saw that slip she had made in her flurry, for she blushed crimson: "I have learnt to honour the King," says she, drawing up, "and 'twere as well that others suspected neither His Majesty nor me."

"If you respected your mother a little more," Frank said, "Trix, you would do yourself no hurt."

"I am no child," says she, turning round on him: "we have lived very well these five years without the benefit of your advice or example, and I intend to take neither now. Why does not the head of the house speak?" she went on; "he rules everything here. When his chaplain has done singing the psalms, will his Lordship deliver the sermon? I am tired of the psalms." The Prince had used almost the very same words in regard to Colonel Esmond that the imprudent girl repeated in her wrath.

"You show yourself a very apt scholar, madam," says the Colonel: and, turning to his mistress, "Did your guest use these words in your Ladyship's hearing, or was it to Beatrix in private that he was pleased to impart his opinion regarding my tiresome sermon?"

"Have you seen him alone?" cries my Lord, starting up with an oath: "by God, have you seen him alone?"

"Were he here, you wouldn't dare so to insult me: no, you would not dare": cries Frank's sister. "Keep your oaths, my Lord, for your wife; we are not used here to such language. Till you came, there used to be kindness between me and mamma, and I cared for her when you never did, when you were away for years with your horses and your mistress, and your Popish wife."

Colonel Esmond could not refrain from a smile, to see how easy Frank's attack was drawn off by that feint. "I fancy" says Mr. Esmond, rather scornfully, "it is about my Lord Castlewood's sister, and not his wife, the question is. Let us bring our talk back to it, as you will have me meddle in it. And I will give you frankly my opinion, that a house where a Prince lies all day, who respects no woman, is no house for a young unmarried lady; that you were better in the country than here: that he is here o na great end, from which no folly should divert him: and that having nobly done your part of this morning, Beatrix, you should retire off the scene awhile, and leave it to the other actors of the play."

As the Colonel spoke with a perfect calmness and politeness, such as 'tis to be hoped he hath always shown to women, his mistress stood by him on one side of the table, and Frank Castlewood on the other, hemming in poor Beatrix, that was behind it, and, as it were, surrounding her with our approaches.

Having twice sallied out and been beaten back, she now, as I expected, tried the *ultima ratio* of women, and had recourse to tears. Her beautiful eyes filled with them: I

never could bear in her, nor in any woman, that expression of pain:—"I am alone," sobbed she; "you are three against me—my brother, my mother, and you. What have I done, that you should speak and look so unkindly at me? Is it my fault that the Prince should, as you say, admire me? Did I bring him here? Did I do aught but what you bade me, in making him welcome? Did you not tell me that our duty was to die for him? Did you not teach me, mother, night and morning, to pray for the King, before even ourselves? What would you have of me, Cousin, for you are the chief of the conspiracy against me; I know you are, sir, and that my mother and brother are acting but as you bid them: whither would you have me go?"

"I would but remove from the Prince," says Esmond gravely, "a dangerous temptation. Heaven forbid I should say you would yield: I would only have him free of it. Your honour needs no guardian, please God, but his imprudence doth. He is so far removed from all women by his rank, that his pursuit of them cannot but be unlawful. We would remove the dearest and fairest of our family from the chance of that insult, and that is why we would have you go, dear Beatrix."

"Harry speaks like a book," says Frank, with one of his oaths, "and, by——, every word he saith is true. You can't help being handsome, Trix; no more can the Prince help following you. My counsel is that you go out of harm's way; for, by the Lord, were the Prince to play any tricks with you, King as he is, or is to be, Harry Esmond and I would have justice of him."

"Are not two such champions enough to guard me?" says Beatrix, something sorrowfully; "sure with you two watching, no evil could happen to me."

"In faith, I think not, Beatrix," says Colonel Esmond; "nor if the Prince knew us would he try."

"But does he know you?" interposed Lady Castlewood, very quiet: "he comes of a country where the pursuit of

kings is thought no dishonour to a woman. Let us go, dearest Beatrix! Shall we go to Walcote or to Castlewood? We are best away from the city; and when the Prince is acknowledged, and our champions have restored him, and he hath his own house at St. James's or Windsor, we can come back to ours here. Do you think so, Harry and Frank?"

Frank and Harry thought with her, you may be sure.

"We will go then," says Beatrix, turning a little pale; "Lady Masham is to give me warning to-night how Her Majesty is, and to-morrow——"

"I think we had best go to day, my dear," says my Lady Castlewood; "we might have the coach and sleep at Hounslow, and reach home to-morrow. 'Tis twelve o'clock; bid the coach, Cousin, be ready at one."

"For shame!" burst out Beatrix, in a passion of tears and mortification. "You disgrace me by your cruel precautions; my own mother is the first to suspect me, and would take me away as my gaoler. I will not go with you, mother; I will go as no one's prisoner. If I wanted to deceive, do you think I could find no means of evading you? My family suspects me. As those mistrust me that ought to love me most, let me leave them; I will go, but I will go alone: to Castlewood, be it. I have been unhappy there and lonely enough; let me go back, but spare me at least the humiliation of setting a watch over my misery, which is a trial I can't bear. Let me go when you will, but alone, or not at all. You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness, and I will bear it as I have borne it before. Let my gaoler-in chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long I'll thank you, and remember you, and you, brother, and you, mother, how shall I show my gratitude to you for your careful defence of my honour?"

She swept out of the room with the air of an empress,

flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field, but scared, and almost ashamed of our victory.

Beatrix's departure took place within an hour, her maid going with her in the post-chaise, and a man armed on the coach-box to prevent any danger of the road. Esmond and Frank thought of escorting the carriage, but she indignantly refused their company, and another man was sent to follow the coach, and not to leave it till it had passed over Hounslow Heath on the next day.

We had a gloomy and silent meal; it seemed as if a darkness was over the house, since the bright face of Beatrix had been withdrawn from it. In the afternoon came a message from the favourite to relieve us somewhat from this despondency. "The Queen hath been much shaken," the note said: "she is better now, and all things will go well. Let *my Lord Castlewood* be ready against we send for him."

At night there came a second billet: "There hath been a great battle in Council; Lord Treasurer hath broke his staff, and hath fallen never to rise again; no successor is appointed. Lord B—— receives a great Whig company to-night at Golden Square. If he is trimming, others are true; the Queen hath no more fits, but is a-bed now, and more quiet. Be ready against morning, when I still hope all will be well."

The Prince came home shortly after the messenger who bore this billet had left the house. His Royal Highness was so much better for the Bishop's liquor, that to talk affairs to him now was of little service. He was helped to the royal bed; he called Castlewood familiarly by his own name; he quite forgot the part upon the acting of which his crown, his safety, depended. 'Twas lucky that my Lady Castlewood's servants were out of the way, and only those heard him who would not betray him. He inquired after the adorable Beatrix, with a royal hiccup in his voice; he

was easily got to bed, and in a minute or two plunged in that deep slumber and forgetfulness with which Bacchus rewards the votaries of that god.

The account of the previous evening was known all over the town early next day. A violent altercation had taken place before the Queen in the Council Chamber; and all the coffee-houses had their version of the quarrel. The news brought my Lord Bishop early to Kensington Square, where he awaited the waking of his royal master above stairs, and spoke confidently of having him proclaimed as Prince of Wales and heir to the throne before that day was over. The Bishop had entertained on the previous afternoon certain of the most influential gentlemen of the true British party. His Royal Highness had charmed all, both Scots and English, Papists and Churchmen: "Even Quakers," says he, "were at our meeting; and, if the stranger took a little too much British punch and ale, he will soon grow more accustomed to those liquors; and my Lord Castlewood," says the Bishop with a laugh, "must bear the cruel charge of having been for once in his life a little tipsy. He toasted your lovely sister a dozen times, at which we all laughed," says the Bishop, "admiring so much fraternal affection. Where is that charming nymph, and why doth she not adorn your Ladyship's tea-table with her bright eyes?"

Her Ladyship said drily that Beatrix was not at home that morning; my Lord Bishop was too busy with great affairs to trouble himself much about the presence or absence of any lady, however beautiful.

We were yet at table when Dr. A—— came from the Palace with a look of great alarm; the shocks the Queen had had the day before had acted on her severely; he had been sent for, and had ordered her to be blooded. The surgeon of Long Acre had come to cup the Queen, and Her Majesty was now more easy and breathed more freely.

No second visit could be paid to the Queen on that day

at any rate; and when our guest above gave his signal that he was awake, the Doctor, the Bishop, and Colonel Esmond waited upon the Prince's Aide, and brought him their news, cheerful or dubious. The doctor had to go away presently, but promised to keep the Prince constantly acquainted with what was taking place at the Palace hard by. His counsel was, and the Bishop's, that as soon as ever the Queen's malady took a favourable turn, the Prince should be introduced to her bedside; the Council summoned; the guard at Kensington and St. James's, of which two regiments were to be entirely relied on, and one known not to be hostile, would declare for the Prince, as the Queen would before the Lords of her Council, designating him as the heir to her throne.

With locked doors, and Colonel Esmond acting as secretary, the Prince and his Lordship of Rochester passed many hours of this day, composing Proclamations and Addresses to the Country, to the Scots, to the Clergy, to the people of London and England; announcing the arrival of the exile descendant of three Sovereigns, and his acknowledgment by his sister as heir to the throne. Every safeguard for their liberties, the Church and People could ask, was promised to them. The Bishop could answer for the adhesion of very many prelates, who besought of their flocks and brother ecclesiastics to recognise the sacred right of the future Sovereign and to purge the country of the sin of rebellion.

During the composition of these papers, more messengers than one came from the Palace regarding the state of the august patient there lying. At midday she was somewhat better; at evening the torpor again seized her and she wandered in her mind. At night Dr. A—— was with us again, with a report rather more favourable; no instant danger at any rate was apprehended. In the course of the last two years Her Majesty had had many attacks similar, but more severe.

By this time we had finished a half-dozen of Proclamations (the wording of them so as to offend no parties, and not to give umbrage to Whigs or Dissenters, required very great caution), and the young Prince, who had indeed shown, during a long day's labour, both alacrity at seizing the information given him, and ingenuity and skill in turning the phrases which were to go out signed by his name, here exhibited a good-humour and thoughtfulness that ought to be set down to his credit.

"Were these papers to be mislaid," says he, "or our scheme to come to mishap, my Lord Esmond's writing would bring him to a place where I heartily hope never to see him; and so, by your leave, I will copy the papers myself, though I am not very strong in spelling; and if they are found they will implicate none but the person they most concern"; and so, having carefully copied the Proclamations out, the Prince burned those in Colonel Esmond's handwriting: "And now, and now, gentlemen," says he, "let us go to supper, and drink a glass with the ladies. My Lord Esmond, you will sup with us to-night; you have given us of late too little of your company."

The Prince's meals were commonly served in the chamber which had been Beatrix's bedroom, adjoining that in which he slept. And the dutiful practice of his entertainers was to wait until their royal guest bade them take their places at table before they sat down to partake of the meal. On this night, as you may suppose, only Frank Castlewood and his mother were in waiting when the supper was announced to receive the Prince, who had passed the whole of the day in his own apartment, with the Bishop as his Minister of State, and Colonel Esmond officiating as Secretary of his Council.

The Prince's countenance wore an expression by no means pleasant, when looking towards the little company assembled, and waiting for him, he did not see Beatrix's bright face there as usual to greet him. He asked Lady

Esmond for his fair introducer of yesterday: her ladyship only cast her eyes down and said quietly, Beatrix could not be of the supper that night.

Our guest swallowed his supper very sulkily: it was not till the second bottle His Highness began to rally. When Lady Castlewood asked leave to depart, he sent a message to Beatrix, hoping she would be present at the next day's dinner, and applied himself to drink, and to talk afterwards, for which there was subject in plenty.

The next day we heard from our informer at Kensington that the Queen was somewhat better, and had been up for an hour, though she was not well enough yet to receive any visitor.

At dinner a single cover was laid for His Royal Highness; and the two gentlemen alone waited on him. We had had a consultation in the morning with Lady Castlewood, in which it had been determined that, should His Highness ask further questions about Beatrix, he should be answered by the gentlemen of the house.

He was evidently disturbed and uneasy, looking towards the door constantly, as if expecting some one. There came, however, nobody, except honest John Lockwood, when he knocked with a dish, which those within took from him; so the meals were always arranged, and I believe the council in the kitchen were of opinion that my young lord had brought over a priest, who had converted us all into Papists, and that Papists were like Jews, eating together, and not choosing to take their meals in the sight of Christians.

The Prince tried to cover his displeasure: he was but a clumsy dissembler at that time, and when out of humour could with difficulty keep a serene countenance; and having made some foolish attempts at trivial talk, he came to his point presently, and in as easy a manner as he could, saying to Lord Castlewood, he hoped, he requested, his lordship's mother and sister would be of the supper that

night. As the time hung heavy on him, and he must not go abroad, would not Miss Beatrix hold him company at a game of cards?

At this, looking up at Esmond, and taking the signal from him, Lord Castlewood informed his Royal Highness that his sister Beatrix was not at Kensington; and that her family had thought it best she should quit the town.

"Not at Kensington!" says he. "Is she ill? she was well yesterday; wherefore should she quit the town? Is it at your orders, my lord, or Colonel Esmond's, who seems the master of this house?"

"Not of this, sir," says Frank very nobly, "only of our house in the country, which he hath given to us. This is my mother's house, and Walcote is my father's, and the Marquis of Esmond knows he hath but to give his word, and I return his to him."

"The Marquis of Esmond!—the Marquis of Esmond," says the Prince, tossing off a glass, "meddles too much with my affairs, and presumes on the service he hath done me. If you want to carry your suit with Beatrix, my lord, by locking her up in gaol, let me tell you that is not the way to win a woman."

"I was not aware, sir, that I had spoken of my suit to Madame Beatrix to your Royal Highness."

"Bah, bah, monsieur! we need not be a conjuror to see that. It makes itself seen at all moments. You are jealous, my lord, and the maid of honour cannot look at another face without yours beginning to scowl. That which you do is unworthy, monsieur; is inhospitable—is, is lâche, yes, lâche" (he spoke rapidly in French, his rage carrying him away with each phrase): "I come to your house; I risk my life; I pass it in ennui; I repose myself on your fidelity; I have no company but your lordship's sermons or the conversations of that adorable young lady, and you take her from me, and you, you rest! Merci, monsieur! I shall thank you when I have the means; I shall know to

recompense a devotion a little importunate, my lord—a little importunate. For a month past your airs of protector have annoyed me beyond measure. You deign to offer me the crown, and bid me take it on my knees like King John —eh! I know my history, monsieur, and mock myself of frowning barons. I admire your mistress, and you send her to a Bastile of the Province; I enter your house, and you mistrust me. I will leave it, monsieur; from to night I will leave it. I have other friends whose loyalty will not be so ready to question mine. If I have Garters to give away, 'tis to noblemen who are not so ready to think evil. Bring me a coach and let me quit this place, or let the fair Beatrix return to it. I will not have your hospitality at the expense of the freedom of that fair creature."

This harangue was uttered with rapid gesticulation such as the French use, and in the language of that nation; the Prince striding up and down the room; his face flushed, and his hands trembling with anger. He was very thin and frail from repeated illness and a life of pleasure. Either Castlewood or Esmond could have broke him across their knee, and in half a minute's struggle put an end to him; and here he was insulting us both, and scarce deigning to hide from the two, whose honour it most concerned, the passion he felt for the young lady of our family. My Lord Castlewood replied to the Prince's tirade very nobly and simply.

"Sir," says he, "your Royal Highness is pleased to forget that others risk their lives, and for your cause. Very few Englishmen, please God, would dare to lay hands on your sacred person, though none would ever think of respecting ours. Our family's lives are at your service, and everything we have, except our honour."

"Honour! bah, sir, who ever thought of hurting your honour?" says the Prince with a peevish air.

"We implore your Royal Highness never to think of hurting it," says Lord Castlewood, with a low bow. The

night being warm, the windows were open both towards the Gardens and the Square. Colonel Esmond heard through the closed door the voice of the watchman calling the hour in the Square on the other side. He opened the door communicating with the Prince's room; Martin, the servant that had rode with Beatrix to Hounslow, was just going out of the chamber as Esmond entered it, and when the fellow was gone, and the watchman again sang his cry of "Past ten o'clock, and a starlight night," Esmond spoke to the Prince in a low voice and said, "Your Royal Highness hears that man?"

"Après, monsieur?" says the Prince.

"I have but to beckon him from the window, and send him fifty yards, and he returns with a guard of men, and I deliver up to him the body of the person calling himself James the Third, for whose capture Parliament hath offered a reward of £500, as your Royal Highness saw on our ride from Rochester. I have but to say the word, and, by the Heaven that made me, I would say it if I thought the Prince, for his honour's sake, would not desist from insulting ours. But the first gentleman of England knows his duty too well to forget himself with the humblest, or peril his crown for a deed that were shameful if it were done."

"Has your lordship anything to say," says the Prince, turning to Frank Castlewood, and quite pale with anger; "any threat or any insult, with which you would like to end this agreeable night's entertainment?"

"I follow the head of our house," says Castlewood, bowing gravely. "At what time shall it please the Prince that we should wait upon him in the morning?"

"You will wait on the Bishop of Rochester early, you will bid him bring his coach hither; and prepare an apartment for me in his own house, or in a place of safety. The King will reward you handsomely, never fear, for all you have done in his behalf. I wish you a good night, and shall go to bed, unless it pleases the Marquis or

Esmond to call his colleague, the watchman, and that I should pass the night with the Kensington guard. Fare you well, be sure I will remember you. My Lord Castlewood, I can go to bed to-night without need of a chamberlain." And the Prince dismissed us with a grim bow, locking one door as he spoke, that into the supping-room, and the other through which we passed, after us. It led into the small chamber which Frank Castlewood or *Monsieur Baptiste* occupied, and by which Martin entered when Colonel Esmond but now saw him in the chamber.

At an early hour next morning the Bishop arrived, and was closeted for some time with his master in his own apartment, where the Prince laid open to his counsellor the wrongs which, according to his version, he had received from the gentlemen of the Esmond family. The worthy prelate came out from the conference with an air of great satisfaction; he was a man full of resources, and of a most assured fidelity, and possessed of genius, and a hundred good qualities; but captious and of a most jealous temper, that could not help exulting at the downfall of any favourite; and he was pleased in spite of himself to hear that the Esmond Ministry was at an end.

"I have soothed your guest," says he, coming out to the two gentlemen and the widow, who had been made acquainted with somewhat of the dispute of the night before. (By the version we gave her, the Prince was only made to exhibit anger because we doubted of his intentions in respect to Beatrix: and to leave us, because we questioned his honour.) "But I think, all things considered, 'tis as well he should leave this house; and then, my Lady Castlewood," says the Bishop, "my pretty Beatrix may come back to it."

"She is quite as well at home at Castlewood," Esmond's mistress said, "till everything is over."

"You shall have your title, Esmond, that I promise you," says the good Bishop, assuming the airs of a Prime

Minister. "The Prince hath expressed himself most nobly in regard of the little difference of last night, and I promise you he hath listened to my sermon, as well as to that of other folks," says the Doctor archly.

The Prince entered the room presently with a smile on his face, and if he felt any offence against us on the previous night, at present exhibited none. He offered a hand to each gentleman with great courtesy. "If all your bishops preach so well as Doctor Atterbury," says he, "I don't know, gentlemen, what may happen to me. I spoke very hastily, my lords, last night, and ask pardon of both of you. But I must not stay any longer," says he, "giving umbrage to good friends, or keeping pretty girls away from their homes. My Lord Bishop hath found a safe place for me, hard by at a curate's house, whom the Bishop can trust, and whose wife is so ugly as to be beyond all danger; we will decamp into those new quarters, and I will leave you, thanking you for a hundred kindnesses here. Where is my hostess, that I may bid her farewell? to welcome her in a house of my own, soon, I trust, where my friends shall have no cause to quarrel with me."

Lady Castlewood arrived presently, blushing with great grace, and tears filling her eyes as the Prince graciously saluted her.

As characters written with a secret ink come out with the application of fire, and disappear again and leave the paper white, so soon as it is cool, a hundred names of men, high in repute and favouring the Prince's cause, that were writ in our private lists, would have been visible enough on the great roll of the conspiracy, had it ever been laid open under the sun. What crowds would have pressed forward and subscribed their names and protested their loyalty when the danger was over! What a number of Whigs now high in place and creatures of the all powerful Minister scorned Mr. Walpole then! If ever a match was gained by the manliness and decision of a few at a moment o

danger; if ever one was lost by the treachery and imbecility of those that had the cards in their hands and might have played them, it was in that momentous game which was enacted in the next three days, and of which the noblest crown in the world was the stake.

From the conduct of my Lord Bolingbroke, those who were interested in the scheme they had in hand saw pretty well that he was not to be trusted. Should the Prince prevail, it was his lordship's gracious intention to declare for him: should the Hanoverian party bring in their Sovereign, who more ready to go on his knee, and cry "God save King George"? And he betrayed the one Prince and the other; but exactly at the wrong time. When he should have struck for King James, he faltered and coquetted with the Whigs; and having committed himself by the most monstrous professions of devotion, which the Elector rightly scorned, he proved the justice of their contempt for him by flying and taking renegade service with St. Germains, just when he should have kept aloof: and that Court despised him, as the manly and resolute men who established the Elector in England had before done. He signed his own name to every accusation of insincerity his enemies made against him; and the King and the Pretender alike could show proofs of St. John's treachery under his own hand and seal.

Our friends kept a pretty close watch upon his motions, as on those of the brave and hearty Whig party, that made little concealment of theirs. They would have in the Elector, and used every means in their power to effect their end. My Lord Marlborough was now with them. His expulsion from power by the Tories had thrown that great captain at once on the Whig side. We heard he was coming from Antwerp; and, in fact, on the day of the Queen's death, he once more landed on English shore. A great part of the army was always with their illustrious leader; even the Tories in it were indignant at the injustice

of the persecution which the Whig officers were made to undergo. The chiefs of these were in London, and at the head of them one of the most intrepid men in the world, the Scots Duke of Argyle, whose conduct on the second day after that to which I have now brought down my story, ended, as such honesty and bravery deserved to end, by establishing the present Royal race on the English throne.

Meanwhile there was no slight difference of opinion amongst the councillors surrounding the Prince, as to the plan His Highness should pursue. His female Minister at Court, fancying she saw some amelioration in the Queen, was for waiting a few days, or hours it might be, until he could be brought to her bedside, and acknowledged as her heir. Mr. Esmond was for having him march thither, escorted by a couple of troops of Horse Guards, and openly presenting himself to the Council. During the whole of the night of the 29th-30th July, the Colonel was engaged with gentlemen of the military profession, whom 'tis needless here to name; suffice it to say that several of them had exceeding high rank in the army, and one of them in especial was a General, who, when he heard the Duke of Marlborough was coming on the other side, waved his crutch over his head with a huzzah, at the idea that he should march out and engage him. Of the three Secretaries of State, we knew that one was devoted to us. The Governor of the Tower was ours; the two companies on duty at Kensington barrack were safe; and we had intelligence, very speedy and accurate, of all that took place at the Palace within.

At noon, on the 30th of July, a message came to the Prince's friends that the committee of Council was sitting at Kensington Palace, their Graces of Ormond and Shrewsbury, and Archbishop of Canterbury and the three Secretaries of State, being there assembled. In an hour afterwards, hurried news was brought that the two great Whig

Dukes, Argyle and Somerset, had broke into the Council Chamber without a summons, and taken their seat at table. After holding a debate there, the whole party proceeded to the chamber of the Queen, who was lying in great weakness, but still sensible, and the Lords recommended his Grace of Shrewsbury as the fittest person to take the vacant place of Lord Treasurer. Her Majesty gave him the staff, as all know. "And now," writ my messenger from Court, "*now or never is the time.*"

Now or never was the time indeed. In spite of the Whig Dukes, our side had still the majority in the Council, and Esmond, to whom the message had been brought (the personage at Court not being aware that the Prince had quitted his lodging in Kensington Square), and Esmond's gallant young aide-de-camp, Frank Castlewood, putting on sword and uniform, took a brief leave of their dear lady, who embraced and blessed them both, and went to her chamber to pray for the issue of the great event which was then pending.

Castlewood sped to the barrack to give warning to the captain of the Guard there; and then went to the "King's Arms" tavern at Kensington, where our friends were assembled, having come by parties of twos and threes, riding or in coaches, and were got together in the upper chamber, fifty-three of them; their servants, who had been instructed to bring arms likewise, being below in the garden of the tavern, where they were served with drink. Out of this garden is a little door that leads into the road of the Palace, and through this it was arranged that masters and servants were to march, when that signal was given, and that personage appeared, for whom all were waiting. There was in our company the famous officer next in command to the Captain General of the Forces, his Grace the Duke of Ormond, who was within at the Council. There were with him two more lieutenant generals, nine major-generals and brigadiers, seven colonels, eleven Peers

of Parliament, and twenty-one members of the House of Commons. The Guard was with us within and without the Palace; the Queen was with us; the Council (save the two Whig Dukes, that must have succumbed); the day was our own, and with a beating heart Esmond walked rapidly to the Mall of Kensington, where he had parted with the Prince on the night before.

He ran to the curate's house in Kensington Mall, and asked for Mr. Bates, the name the Prince went by. The curate's wife said Mr. Bates had gone abroad very early in the morning in his boots, saying he was going to the Bishop of Rochester's house at Chelsey. But the Bishop had been at Kensington himself two hours ago to seek for Mr. Bates, and had returned in his coach to his own house, when he heard that the gentleman was gone thither to seek him.

This absence was most unpropitious, for an hour's delay might cost a kingdom; Esmond had nothing for it but to hasten to the "King's Arms," and tell the gentlemen there assembled that Mr. George (as we called the Prince there) was not at home, but that Esmond would go fetch him; and taking a General's coach that happened to be there, Esmond drove across the country to Chelsey, to the Bishop's house there.

The porter said two gentlemen were with his lordship, and Esmond had passed this sentry up to the locked door of the Bishop's study, at which he rattled, and was admitted presently. Of the Bishop's guests one was a brother prelate, and the other the Abbé G——.

"Where is Mr. George?" says Mr. Esmond; "now is the time."

The Bishop looked scared. "I went to his lodging," he said, "and they told me he was come hither. I returned as quick as coach would carry me; and he hath not been here."

The Colonel burst out with an oath; that was all he

could say to their reverences: ran down the stairs again, and bidding the coachman, an old friend and fellow-campaigner, drive as if he was charging the French with his master at Wynendael—they were back as Kensington in half-an-hour.

Again Esmond went to the curate's house. Mr. Bates had not returned. The Colonel had to go with this blank errand to the gentlemen at the "King's Arms," that were grown very impatient by this time.

Out of the window of the tavern, and looking over the garden wall, you can see the green before Kensington Palace, the Palace gate (round which the Minister's coaches were standing), and the barrack building. As we were looking out from this window in gloomy discourse, we heard presently trumpets blowing, and some of us ran to the window of the front room, looking into the High Street of Kensington, and saw a regiment of horse coming.

"It's Ormond's Guards," says one.

"No, by God, it's Argyle's old regiment!" says my General, clapping down his crutch.

It was, indeed, Argyle's regiment that was brought from Westminster, and that took the place of the regiment at Kensington on which we could rely.

"Oh, Harry!" says one of the Generals there present, "you were born under an unlucky star; I begin to think that there's no Mr. George, nor Mr. Dragon either. 'Tis not the peerage I care for, for our name is so ancient and famous, that merely to be called Lord Lydiard would do me no good; but 'tis the chance you promised me of fighting Marlborough."

As we were talking, Castlewood entered the room with a disturbed air.

"What news, Frank?" says the Colonel. "Is Mr. George coming at last?"

"Damn him, look here!" says Castlewood, holding out a paper. "I found it in the book—the what you call it,

'Eikum Basilikum,'—that villain Martin put it there—he said his young mistress bade him. It was directed to me, but it was meant for him I know, and I broke the seal and read it."

The whole assembly of officers seemed to swim away before Esmond's eyes as he read the paper; all that was written on it was :—"Beatrix Esmond is sent away to prison, to Castlewood, where she will pray for happier days."

"Can you guess where he is?" says Castlewood.

"Yes," says Colonel Esmond. He knew full well. Frank knew full well: our instinct told whither that traitor had fled.

He had courage to turn to the company and say: "Gentlemen, I fear very much that Mr. George will not be here to-day: something hath happened—and—and—I very much fear some accident may befall him, which must keep him out of the way. Having had your noon's draught, you had best pay the reckoning and go home; there can be no game where there is no one to play it."

Some of the gentlemen went away without a word, others called to pay their duty to Her Majesty and ask for her health. The little army disappeared into the darkness out of which it had been called; there had been no writings, no paper to implicate any man. Some few officers and members of Parliament had been invited over night to breakfast at the "King's Arms" at Kensington; and they had called for their bill and gone home.

"Does my mistress know of this?" Esmond asked of Frank, as they walked along.

"My mother found the letter in the book, on the toilet table. She had writ it ere she had left home," Frank said. "Mother met her on the stairs, with her hand upon the door, trying to enter, and never left her after that till she went away. He did not think of looking at it there, nor had Martin the chance of telling him. I believe the poor

devil meant no harm, though I half killed him: he thought 'twas to Beatrix's brother he was bringing the letter."

Frank never said a word of reproach to me for having brought the villain amongst us. As we knocked at the door I said, "When will the horses be ready?" Frank pointed with his cane, they were turning the street that moment.

We went up and bade adieu to our mistress; she was in a dreadful state of agitation by this time, and that Bishop was with her whose company she was so fond of.

"Did you tell him, my lord," says Esmond, "that Beatrix was at Castlewood?" The Bishop blushed and stammered: "Well," says he, "I——"

"You served the villain right," broke out Mr. Esmond, "and he has lost a crown by what you told him."

My mistress turned quite white. "Henry, Henry," says she, "do not kill him!"

"It may not be too late," says Esmond; "he may not have gone to Castlewood; pray God it is not too late." The Bishop was breaking out with some *banale* phrases about loyalty, and the sacredness of the Sovereign's person; but Esmond sternly bade him hold his tongue, burn all papers, and take care of Lady Castlewood; and in five minutes he and Frank were in the saddle, John Lockwood behind them, riding towards Castlewood at a rapid pace.

"We have a fine moonlight night for riding on," says Esmond; "Frank, we may reach Castlewood in time yet." All the way along they made inquiries at the post-houses. when a tall young gentleman in a grey suit, with a light-brown periwig, just the colour of my lord's, had been seen to pass. He had set off at six that morning, and we at three in the afternoon. He rode almost as quickly as we had done: he was seven hours ahead of us still when we reached the last stage.

We rode over Castlewood Downs before the breaking of dawn. We passed the very spot where the car was upset

fourteen years since, and Mohun lay. The village was not up yet, nor the forge lighted, as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. We got off our horses at the bridge and walked up to the gate.

"If she is safe," says Frank, trembling, and his honest eyes filling with tears, "a silver statue to Our Lady!" He was going to rattle at the great iron knocker on the oak gate; but Esmond stopped his kinsman's hand. He had his own fears, his own hopes, his own despairs and griefs, too; but he spoke not a word of these to his companion, or showed any signs of emotion.

He went and tapped at the little window at the porter's lodge, gently, but repeatedly, until the man came to the bars.

"Who's there?" says he, looking out. It was the servant from Kensington.

"My Lord Castlewood and Colonel Esmond," we said, from below. "Open the gate and let us in without any noise."

"My Lord Castlewood?" says the other; "my lord's here, and in bed."

"Open, d—— you," says Castlewood, with a curse.

"I shall open to no one," says the man, shutting the glass window as Frank drew a pistol. He would have fired at the porter, but Esmond again held his hand.

"There are more ways than one," says he, "of entering such a great house as this." Frank grumbled that the west gate was half a mile round. "But I know of a way that's not a hundred yards off," says Mr. Esmond; and leading his kinsman close along the wall, and by the shrubs which had now grown thick on what had been an old moat about the house, they came to the buttress, at the side of which the little window was. Esmond climbed up to this easily, broke a pane that had been mended, and touched the spring inside, and the two gentlemen passed in that way,

treading as lightly as they could; and so going through the passage into the court, over which the dawn was now reddening, and where the fountain plashed in the silence.

They sped instantly to the porter's lodge, where the fellow had not fastened his door that led into the court; and pistol in hand came upon the terrified wretch, and bade him be silent. Then they asked him (Esmond's head reeled, and he almost fell as he spoke) when Lord Castlewood had arrived? He said on the previous evening, about eight of the clock.—"And what then?"—His lordship supped with his sister.—"Did the man wait?"—Yes, he and my lady's maid both waited: the other servants made the supper; and there was no wine, and they could give his lordship but milk, at which he grumbled; and—Madam Beatrix kept Miss Lucy always in the room with her. And there being a bed across the court in the chaplain's room, she had arranged my lord was to sleep there. Madam Beatrix had come downstairs laughing with the maids, and had locked herself in, and my lord had stood for a while talking to her through the door, and she laughing at him. And then he paced the court awhile, and she came again to the upper window; and my lord implored her to come down and walk in the room; but she would not, and laughed at him again, and shut the window; and so my lord, uttering what seemed curses, but in a foreign language, went to the chaplain's room to bed.

"Was this all?"—"All," the man swore upon his honour; all, as he hoped to be saved.

Frank sat down on a stone bench in the courtyard, and fairly fell asleep, while Esmond paced up and down the court, debating what should ensue.

When he had thought his thoughts out he shook up poor Frank from his sleep, who rose yawning. "You must back me," says Esmond, "in what I am going to do. I have been thinking that yonder scoundrel may have been instructed to tell that story, and that the whole of it may

be a lie; if it be, we shall find it out from the gentleman who is asleep yonder. See if the door leading to my lady's rooms" (so we called the rooms at the north-west angle of the house), "see if the door is barred as he saith." We tried; it was indeed as the lacquey had said, closed within.

"It may have been opened and shut afterwards," says poor Esmond; "the foundress of our family let our ancestor in that way."

"What will you do, Harry, if—if what that fellow saith should turn out untrue?" The young man looked scared and frightened into his kinsman's face; I dare say it wore no very pleasant expression.

"Let us first go see whether the two stories agree," says Esmond: and went in at the passage and opened the door into what had been his own chamber now for well nigh five-and-twenty years. A candle was still burning, and the Prince asleep dressed on the bed—Esmond did not care for making a noise. The Prince started up in his bed, seeing two men in his chamber: "Qui est là?" says he, and took a pistol from under his pillow.

"It is the Marquis of Esmond," says the Colonel, "come to welcome His Majesty to his house of Castlewood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the King's orders, I passed the night before last, after leaving His Majesty, in waiting upon the friends of the King. It is a pity that His Majesty's desire to see the country and to visit our poor house should have caused the King to quit London without notice yesterday, when the opportunity happened which in all human probability may not occur again; and had the King not chosen to ride to Castlewood, the Prince of Wales might have slept at St. James's."

"'Sdeath! gentlemen," says the Prince, starting off his bed, whereon he was lying in his clothes, "the Doctor was with me yesterday morning, and after watching by my sister all night, told me I might not hope to see the Queen."

"The Prince started up in his bed."

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"It would have been otherwise," says Esmond with another bow; "as, by this time, the Queen may be dead in spite of the Doctor. The Council was met, a new Treasurer was appointed, the troops were devoted to the King's cause; and fifty loyal gentlemen of the greatest names of this kingdom were assembled to accompany the Prince of Wales, who might have been the acknowledged heir of the throne, or the possessor of it by this time, had your Majesty not chosen to take the air. We were ready; there was only one person that failed us, your Majesty's gracious——"

"Morbleu, monsieur, you give me too much Majesty," said the Prince, who had now risen up and seemed to be looking to one of us to help him to his coat. But neither stirred.

"We shall take care," says Esmond, "not much oftener to offend in that particular."

"What mean you, my lord?" says the Prince, and muttered something about a *guet-à-pens* which Esmond caught up.

"The snare, sir," said he, "was not of our laying; it is not we that invited you. We came to avenge, and not to compass, the dishonour of our family."

"Dishonour! Morbleu, there has been no dishonour," says the Prince, turning scarlet, "only a little harmless playing."

"That was meant to end seriously."

"I swear," the Prince broke out impetuously, "upon the honour of a gentleman, my lords——"

"That we arrived in time. No wrong hath been done, Frank," says Colonel Esmond, turning round to young Castlewood, who stood at the door as the talk was going on. "See! here is a paper whereon His Majesty hath deigned to commence some verses in honour, or dishonour, of Beatrix. Here is 'Madame' and 'Flamme,' 'Cruelle' and 'Rebelle,' and 'Amour' and 'Jour,' in the Royal

writing and spelling. Had the gracious lover been happy he had not passed his time in sighing." In fact, and actually as he was speaking, Esmond cast his eyes down towards the table, and saw a paper on which my young Prince had been scrawling a madrigal, that was to finish his charmer on the morrow.

"Sir," says the Prince, burning with rage (he had assumed his Royal coat unassisted by this time), "did I come here to receive insults?"

"To confer them, may it please your Majesty," says the Colonel, with a very low bow, "and the gentlemen of our family are come to thank you."

"*Malédiction!*" says the young man, tears starting into his eyes with helpless rage and mortification. "What will you with me, gentlemen?"

"If your Majesty will please to enter the next apartment," says Esmond, preserving his grave tone, "I have some papers there which I would gladly submit to you, and by your permission I will lead the way"; and, taking the paper up, and backing before the Prince with very great ceremony, Mr. Esmond passed into the little chaplain's room, through which we had just entered the house. "Please to set a chair for His Majesty, Frank," says the Colonel to his companion, who wondered almost as much at this scene, and was as much puzzled by it, as the other actor in it. Then going to the crypt over the mantelpiece, the Colonel opened it, and drew thence the papers which so long had lain there.

"Here, may it please your Majesty," says he, "is the Patent of Marquis sent over by your Royal Father at St. Germains to Viscount Castlewood, my father: here is the witnessed certificate of my father's marriage to my mother, and of my birth and christening; I was christened of that religion of which your sainted sire gave all through life so shining an example. These are my titles, dear Frank, and this what I do with them: here go Baptism and Marriage,

and here the Marquisate and the August Sign-Manual, with which your predecessor was pleased to honour our race." And as Esmond spoke he set the papers burning in the brazier. "You will please, sir, to remember," he continued, "that our family hath ruined itself by fidelity to yours: that my grandfather spent his estate, and gave his blood and his son to die for your service; that my dear lord's grandfather (for lord you are now, Frank, by right and title too) died for the same cause; that my poor kinswoman, my father's second wife, after giving away her honour to your wicked perjured race, sent all her wealth to the King; and got in return that precious title that lies in ashes, and this inestimable yard of blue riband. I lay this at your feet and stamp upon it: I draw this sword and break it and deny you; and, had you completed the wrong you designed us, by Heaven I would have driven it through your heart, and no more pardoned you than your father pardoned Monmouth. Frank will do the same, won't you, Cousin?"

Frank, who had been looking on with a stupid air at the papers as they flamed in the old brazier, took out his sword and broke it, holding his head down:—"I go with my cousin," says he, giving Esmond a grasp of the hand. "Marquis or not, by——, I stand by him any day. I beg your Majesty's pardon for swearing; that is—that is—I'm for the Elector of Hanover. It's all your Majesty's own fault. The Queen's dead most likely by this time. And you might have been King if you hadn't come dangling after Trix."

"Thus to lose a crown," says the young Prince, starting up, and speaking French in his eager way; "to lose the loveliest woman in the world; to lose the loyalty of such hearts as yours, is not this, my lords, enough of humiliation?—Marquis, if I go on my knees, will you pardon me?—No, I can't do that, but I can offer you reparation, that of honour, that of gentlemen. Favour me by crossing the sword with mine: yours is broke—see, yonder in the

armoire are two;" and the Prince took them out as eager as a boy, and held them towards Esmond:—"Ah! you will? Merci! monsieur, merci!"

Extremely touched by this immense mark of condescention and repentance for wrong done, Colonel Esmond bowed down so low as almost to kiss the gracious young hand that conferred on him such an honour, and took his guard in silence. The swords were no sooner met, than Castlewood knocked up Esmond's with the blade of his own, which he had broke off short at the shell; and the Colonel falling back a step dropped his point with another very low bow, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

"Eh bien, Vicomte!" says the young Prince, who was a boy, and a French boy, "il ne nous reste qu'une chose à faire": he placed his sword upon the table, and the fingers of his two hands upon his breast:—"We have one more thing to do," says he; "you do not divine it?" He stretched out his arms:—"*Embrassons nous*!"

Horses were fetched and put to the chariot presently. My lord rode outside, and as for Esmond he was so tired that he was no sooner in the carriage than he fell asleep, and never woke till night, as the coach came into Alton.

As we drove to the "Bell Inn" comes a mitred coach with our old friend Lockwood beside the coachman. My Lady Castlewood and the Bishop were inside; she gave a little scream when she saw us. The two coaches entered the inn almost together; the landlord and people coming out with lights to welcome the visitors.

We in our coach sprang out of it, as soon as ever we saw the dear lady, and above all the Doctor in his cassock. What was the news? Was there yet time? Was the Queen alive? These questions were put hurriedly, as Boniface stood waiting before his noble guests to bow them up the stair.

The Bishop's news was reassuring: at least all was not lost; the Queen yet breathed, or was alive when they left London, six hours since. ("It was Lady Castlewood who

insisted on coming," the Doctor said.) Argyle had marched up regiments from Portsmouth, and sent abroad for more; the Whigs were on the alert, a pest on them (I am not sure but the Bishop swore as he spoke), and so too were our people. And all might be saved, if only the Prince could be at London in time. We called for horses, instantly to return to London. We never went up poor crest fallen Boniface's stairs, but into our coaches again. The Prince and his Prime Minister in one, Esmond in the other, with only his dear mistress as a companion.

Castlewood galloped forwards on horseback, to gather the Prince's friends and warn them of his coming. We travelled through the night—Esmond discoursing to his mistress of the events of the last twenty-four hours: of Castlewood's ride and his; of the Prince's generous behaviour and their reconciliation. The night seemed short enough; and the starlit hours passed away serenely in that fond company.

So we came along the road; the Bishop's coach heading ours; and, with some delays in procuring horses, we got to Hammersmith about four o'clock on Sunday morning, the first of August, and half an hour after, it being then bright day, we rode by my Lady Warwick's house, and so down the street of Kensington.

Early as the hour was, there was a bustle in the street, and many people moving to and fro. Round the gate leading to the Palace, where the guard is, there was especially a great crowd. And the coach ahead of us stopped, and the Bishop's man got down to know what the concourse meant.

There presently came from out of the gate—Horse Guards with their trumpets, and a company of heralds with their tabards. The trumpets blew, and the herald-at-arms came forward and proclaimed GEORGE, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. And the people shouted, God save the King!

—W. M. THACKERAY, *Esmond.*

XXV

The First Fight for the Fallen Stuarts

ON the morning when we were to depart from Glasgow, Andrew Fairservice bounced into my apartment like a madman, jumping up and down, and singing, with more vehemence than tune,

"The kiln's on fire—the kiln's on fire—
The kiln's on fire—she's a' in a lowe."

With some difficulty I prevailed on him to cease his confounded clamour, and explain to me what the matter was. He was pleased to inform me, as if he had been bringing the finest news imaginable, "that the Hielands were clean broken out, every man o' them, and that Rob Roy, and a' his breekless bands, wad be down upon Glasgow or twenty-four hours o' the clock gaed round."

"Hold your tongue," said I, "you rascal! You must be drunk or mad; and if there is any truth in your news, is it a singing matter, you scoundrel?"

"Drunk or mad? nae doubt," replied Andrew dauntlessly; "ane's aye drunk or mad if he tells what grit folks dinna like to hear.—Sing? Od, the clans will make us sing on the wrang side o' our mouth, if we are sae drunk or mad as to bide their coming."

I rose in great haste, and found my father and Owen also on foot, and in considerable alarm.

Andrew's news proved but too true in the main. The great rebellion which agitated Britain in the year 1715 had already broken out, by the unfortunate Earl of Mar's

setting up the standard of the Stuart family in an ill-omened hour, to the ruin of many honourable families, both in England and Scotland. The treachery of some of the Jacobite agents (Rashleigh Osbaldistone among the rest), and the arrest of others, had made George the First's Government acquainted with the extensive ramifications of a conspiracy long prepared, and which at last exploded prematurely, and in a part of the kingdom too distant to have any vital effect upon the country, which, however, was plunged into much confusion.

We held an immediate consultation on the measures we were to adopt in this crisis, and acquiesced in my father's plan, that we should instantly get the necessary passports, and make the best of our way to London. I acquainted my father with my wish to offer my personal service to the Government in any volunteer corps, several being already spoken of. He readily acquiesced in my proposal; for though he disliked war as a profession, yet, upon principle, no man would have exposed his life more willingly in defence of civil and religious liberty.

We travelled in haste and in peril through Dumfrieshire and the neighbouring counties of England. In this quarter, gentlemen of the Tory interest were already in motion, mustering men and horses, while the Whigs assembled themselves in the principal towns, armed the inhabitants, and prepared for civil war. We narrowly escaped being stopped on more occasions than one, and were often compelled to take circuitous routes to avoid the points where forces were assembling.

When we reached London, we immediately associated with those bankers and eminent merchants who agreed to support the credit of Government, and to meet that run upon the funds, on which the conspirators had greatly founded their hopes of furthering their undertaking, by rendering the Government, as it were, bankrupt. My father was chosen one of the members of this formidable body of

the moneyed interest, as all had the greatest confidence in his zeal, skill, and activity. He was also the organ by which they communicated with Government, and contrived, from funds belonging to his own house, or over which he had command, to find purchasers for a quantity of the national stock, which was suddenly flung into the market at a depreciated price when the rebellion broke out. I was not idle myself, but obtained a commission, and levied, at my father's expense, about two hundred men, with whom I joined General Carpenter's army.

The rebellion, in the meantime, had extended itself to England. The unfortunate Earl of Derwentwater had taken arms in the cause, along with General Foster. My poor uncle, Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone, whose estate was reduced to almost nothing by his own carelessness and the expense and debauchery of his sons and household, was easily persuaded to join that unfortunate standard. Before doing so, however, he exhibited a degree of precaution of which no one could have suspected him—he made his will!

By this document he devised his estates at Osbaldistone Hall, and so forth, to his sons successively, and their male heirs, until he came to Rashleigh, whom, on account of the turn he had lately taken in politics, he detested with all his might,—he cut him off with a shilling, and settled the estate on me as his next heir. I had always been rather a favourite of the old gentleman; but it is probable that, confident in the number of gigantic youths who now armed around him, he considered the destination as likely to remain a dead letter, which he inserted chiefly to show his displeasure at Rashleigh's treachery, both public and domestic.

But Heaven had decreed a more speedy extinction of his numerous and healthy lineage, than, most probably, he himself had reckoned on. In the very first muster of the conspirators, at a place called Green-Rigg, Thorncliff Osbaldistone quarrelled about precedence with a gentleman

of the Northumbrian border, to the full as fierce and intractable as himself. In spite of all remonstrances, they gave their commander a specimen of how far their discipline might be relied upon, by fighting it out with their rapiers, and my kinsman was killed on the spot.

Percival, the sot, died also in his calling. He had a wager with another gentleman (who, from his exploits in that line, had acquired the formidable epithet of Brandy Swalewell), which should drink the largest cup of strong liquor when King James was proclaimed by the insurgents at Morpeth. The exploit was something enormous. I forget the exact quantity of brandy which Percie swallowed, but it occasioned a fever, of which he expired at the end of three days, with the word, *water*, *water*, perpetually on his tongue.

Dickon broke his neck near Warrington Bridge, in an attempt to show off a foundered blood-mare, which he wished to palm upon a Manchester merchant who had joined the insurgents. He pushed the animal at a five-barred gate; she fell in the leap, and the unfortunate jockey lost his life.

Wilfred the fool, as sometimes befalls, had the best fortune of the family. He was slain at Proud Preston, in Lancashire, on the day that General Carpenter attacked the barricades, fighting with great bravery, though I have heard he was never able exactly to comprehend the cause of quarrel, and did not uniformly remember on which King's side he was engaged. John also behaved very boldly in the same engagement, and received several wounds, of which he was not happy enough to die on the spot.

Old Sir Hildebrand, entirely broken-hearted by these successive losses, became, by the next day's surrender, one of the unhappy prisoners, and was lodged in Newgate with his wounded son John.

I was now released from my military duty, and lost no time, therefore, in endeavouring to relieve the distresses of

these near relations. My father's interest with Government, and the general compassion excited by a parent who had sustained the successive loss of so many sons within so short a time, would have prevented my uncle and cousin from being brought to trial for high treason. But their doom was given forth from a greater tribunal. John died of his wounds in Newgate, recommending to me, in his last breath, a cast of hawks which he had at the Hall, and a black spaniel bitch called Lucy.

My poor uncle seemed beaten down to the very earth by his family calamities, and the circumstances in which he unexpectedly found himself. He said little, but seemed grateful for such attentions as circumstances permitted me to show him. I did not witness his meeting with my father for the first time for so many years, and under circumstances so melancholy; but, judging from my father's extreme depression of spirits, it must have been melancholy in the last degree. Sir Hildebrand spoke with great bitterness against Rashleigh, now his only surviving child: laid upon him the ruin of his house, and the deaths of all his brethren; and declared that neither he nor they would have plunged into political intrigue, but for that very member of his family who had been the first to desert them.

He mentioned the contents of his will, and supplied me with an authenticated copy;—the original he had deposited with my old acquaintance, Mr. Justice Inglewood, who, dreaded by no one, and confided in by all as a kind of neutral person, had become, for aught I know, the depositary of half the wills of the fighting men of both factions in the county of Northumberland.

I could not ascertain by my own observation, or through the medical attendants, that Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone died of any formed complaint bearing a name in the science of medicine. He seemed to me completely worn out and broken down by fatigue of body and distress of mind, and

rather ceased to exist, than died of any positive struggle,—just as a vessel, buffeted and tossed by a succession of tempestuous gales, her timbers overstrained, and her joints loosened, will sometimes spring a leak and founder, when there are no apparent causes for her destruction.

It was a remarkable circumstance that my father, after the last duties were performed to his brother, appeared suddenly to imbibe a strong anxiety that I should act upon the will, and represent his father's house, which had hitherto seemed to be the thing in the world which had least charms for him. But formerly, he had been like the fox in the fable, contemning what was beyond his reach; and, moreover, I doubt not that the excessive dislike which he entertained against Rashleigh (now Sir Rashleigh) Osbaldistone, who loudly threatened to attack his father Sir Hildebrand's will and settlement, corroborated my father's desire to maintain it.

"He had been most unjustly disinherited," he said, "by his own father—his brother's will had repaired the disgrace, if not the injury, by leaving the wreck of his property to Frank, the natural heir, and he was determined the bequest should take effect."

In the meantime, Rashleigh was not altogether a contemptible personage as an opponent. The information he had given to Government was critically well-timed, and his extreme plausibility, with the extent of his intelligence, and the artful manner in which he contrived to assume both merit and influence, had, to a certain extent, procured him patrons among ministers.

To avert these delays as much as possible, my father, by the advice of his counsel learned in the law, paid off and vested in my person the rights to certain large mortgages, affecting Osbaldistone Hall. Instead of commanding me to the desk, as I fully expected, having intimated my willingness to comply with his wishes, however they might destine me, I received his directions to go down to Os-

baldistone Hall, and take possession of it as the heir and representative of the family. I was directed to apply to Squire Inglewood for the copy of my uncle's will deposited with him, and take all necessary measures to secure that possession which sages say makes nine points of the law.

Upon the whole, I was glad to escape from London, from Newgate, and from the scenes which both exhibited, to breathe the free air of Northumberland. Andrew Fairservice had continued in my service more from my father's pleasure than my own. At present there seemed a prospect that his local acquaintance with Osbaldistone Hall and its vicinity might be useful; and, of course, he accompanied me on my journey, and I enjoyed the prospect of getting rid of him, by establishing him in his old quarters.

We performed our journey to the North without any remarkable adventure, and we found the country, so lately agitated by rebellion, now peaceful and in good order. The nearer we approached to Osbaldistone Hall, the more did my heart sink at the thought of entering that deserted mansion; so that, in order to postpone the evil day, I resolved first to make my visit at Mr. Justice Inglewood's.

Old Justice Inglewood received me with great courtesy, and readily exhibited my uncle's will, which seemed to be without a flaw. He was for some time in obvious distress, how he should speak and act in my presence; but when he found that, though a supporter of the present Government upon principle, I was disposed to think with pity on those who had opposed it on a mistaken feeling of loyalty and duty, his discourse became a very diverting medley of what he had done, and what he had left undone,—the pains he had taken to prevent some squires from joining, and to wink at the escape of others, who had been so unlucky as to engage in the affair.

We were *tête-a-tête*, and several bumpers had been quaffed by the justice's special desire, when, on a sudden,

he requested me to fill a *bona fide* brimmer to the health of poor dear Die Vernon, the rose of the wilderness, the heath-bell of Cheviot, and the blossom that's transplanted to an infernal convent.

"Is not Miss Vernon married, then?" I exclaimed, in great astonishment. "I thought his Excellency ——"

"Pooh! pooh! his excellency and his lordship's all a humbug now, you know—mere St. Germains titles—Earl of Beauchamp, and ambassador plenipotentiary from France, when the Duke Regent of Orleans scarce knew that he lived, I dare say. But you must have seen old Sir Frederick Vernon at the Hall, when he played the part of Father Vaughan?"

"Good heavens! then Vaughan was Miss Vernon's father?"

"To be sure he was," said the justice coolly;—"there's no use in keeping the secret now, for he must be out of the country by this time—otherwise, no doubt, it would be my duty to apprehend him.—Come, off with your bumper to my dear lost Die!

> And let her health go round, around, around,
> And let her health go round;
> For though your stocking be of silk,
> Your knees near kiss the ground, aground, aground."

I was unable to join in the justice's jollity. My head swam with the shock I had received. "I never heard," I said, "that Miss Vernon's father was living."

"It was not our Government's fault, that he is," replied Inglewood, "for the devil a man there is whose head would have brought more money. He was condemned to death for Fenwick's plot, and was thought to have had some hand in the Knightsbridge affair, in King William's time; and as he had married in Scotland a relation of the house of Breadalbane, he possessed great influence with all their chiefs. There was a talk of his being demanded to be

given up at the Peace of Ryswick, but he shammed ill, and his death was given publicly out in the French papers. But when he came back here on the old score, we old cavaliers knew him well,—that is to say, I knew him, not as being a cavalier myself, but no information being lodged against the poor gentleman, and my memory being shortened by frequent attacks of the gout, I could not have sworn to him, you know."

"Was he, then, not known at Osbaldistone Hall?" I inquired.

"To none but to his daughter, the old knight, and Rashleigh, who had got at that secret as he did at every one else, and held it like a twisted cord about poor Die's neck. I have seen her one hundred times she would have spit at him, if it had not been fear for her father, whose life would not have been worth five minutes' purchase if he had been discovered to the Government.—But don't mistake me, Mr. Osbaldistone; I say the Government is a good, a gracious, and a just Government; and if it has hanged one-half of the rebels, poor things, all will acknowledge they would not have been touched had they stayed peaceably at home."

Waiving the discussion of these political questions, I brought back Mr. Inglewood to his subject, and I found that Diana, having positively refused to marry any of the Osbaldistone family, and expressed her particular detestation of Rashleigh, he had from that time begun to cool in zeal for the cause of the Pretender; to which, as the youngest of six brethren, and bold, artful, and able, he had hitherto looked forward as the means of making his fortune. Perhaps—for few men were better judges where his interest was concerned—he considered their means and talents to be, as they afterwards proved, greatly inadequate to the important task of overthrowing an established Government. Sir Frederick Vernon, or, as he was called among the Jacobites, his Excellency Viscount Beauchamp,

had, with his daughter, some difficulty in escaping the consequences of Rashleigh's information. Here Mr. Inglewood's information was at fault; but he did not doubt, since we had not heard of Sir Frederick being in the hands of the Government, he must be by this time abroad, where, agreeably to the cruel bond he had entered into with his brother-in-law, Diana, since she had declined to select a husband out of the Osbaldistone family, must be confined to a convent. The original cause of this singular agreement Mr. Inglewood could not perfectly explain; but he understood it was a family compact, entered into for the purpose of securing to Sir Frederick the rents of the remnant of his large estates, which had been vested in the Osbaldistone family by some legal manœuvre; in short, a family compact, in which, like many of those undertaken at that time of day, the feelings of the principal parties interested were no more regarded than if they had been a part of the live stock upon the lands.

I cannot tell—such is the waywardness of the human heart—whether this intelligence gave me joy or sorrow. It seemed to me that, in the knowledge that Miss Vernon was eternally divided from me, not by marriage with another, but by seclusion in a convent, in order to fulfil an absurd bargain of this kind, my regret for her loss was aggravated rather than diminished. I became dull, low-spirited, absent, and unable to support the task of conversing with Justice Inglewood, who in his turn yawned, and proposed to retire early. I took leave of him overnight, determining the next day, before breakfast, to ride over to Osbaldistone Hall.

Mr. Inglewood acquiesced in my proposal. "It would be well," he said, "that I made my appearance there before I was known to be in the country, the more especially as Sir Rashleigh Osbaldistone was now, he understood, at Mr. Jobson's house, hatching some mischief, doubtless. They were fit company," he added,

"for each other, Sir Rashleigh having lost all right to mingle in the society of men of honour; but it was hardly possible two such d—d rascals should collogue together without mischief to honest people."

He concluded by earnestly recommending a toast and tankard, and an attack upon his venison pasty, before I set out in the morning, just to break the cold air on the wolds.

There are few more melancholy sensations than those with which we regard scenes of past pleasure when altered and deserted. In my ride to Osbaldistone Hall, I passed the same objects which I had seen in company with Miss Vernon on the day of a memorable ride from Inglewood Place. Her spirit seemed to keep me company on the way; and when I approached the spot where I had first seen her, I almost listened for the cry of the hounds and the notes of the horn, and strained my eye on the vacant space, as if to descry the fair huntress again descend like an apparition from the hill. But all was silent, and all was solitary. When I reached the Hall, the closed doors and windows, the grass-grown pavement, the courts, which were now so silent, presented a strong contrast to the gay and bustling scene I had so often seen them exhibit, when the merry hunters were going forth to their morning sport, or returning to the daily festival. The joyous bark of the fox-hounds as they were uncoupled, the cries of the huntsmen, the clang of the horses' hoofs, the loud laugh of the old knight at the head of his strong and numerous descendants, were all silenced now and for ever.

While I gazed round the scene of solitude and emptiness, I was inexpressibly affected, even by recollecting those whom, when alive, I had no reason to regard with affection. But the thought that so many youths of goodly presence, warm with life, health, and confidence, were within so short a time cold in the grave, by various, yet all violent and unexpected modes of death, afforded a

"But all was silent, all was solitary."

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picture of mortality at which the mind trembled. It was little consolation to me, that I returned a proprietor to the halls which I had left almost like a fugitive. My mind was not habituated to regard the scenes around as my property, and I felt myself an usurper, at least an intruding stranger, and could hardly divest myself of the idea, that some of the bulky forms of my deceased kinsmen were, like the gigantic spectres of a romance, to appear in the gateway and dispute my entrance.

While I was engaged in these sad thoughts, my follower, Andrew, whose feelings were of a very different nature, exerted himself in thundering alternately on every door in the building, calling, at the same time, for admittance, in a tone so loud as to intimate, that *he*, at least, was fully sensible of his newly-acquired importance, as squire of the body to the new lord of the manor. At length, timidly and reluctantly, Anthony Syddall, my uncle's aged butler and major-domo, presented himself at a lower window, well fenced with iron bars, and inquired our business.

"We are come to tak your charge aff your hand, my auld friend," said Andrew Fairservice; "ye may gie up your keys as sune as ye like—ilka dog has his day. I'll tak the plate and napery aff your hand. Ye hae had your ain time o't, Mr. Syddall; but ilka bean has its black, and ilka path has its puddle; and it will just set you henceforth to sit at the board-end, as weel as it did Andrew lang syne."

Checking with some difficulty the forwardness of my follower, I explained to Syddall the nature of my right, and the title I had to demand admittance into the Hall, as into my own property. The old man seemed much agitated and distressed, and testified manifest reluctance to give me entrance, although it was couched in a humble and submissive tone. I allowed for the agitation of natural feelings, which really did the old man honour; but continued peremptory in my demand of admittance, explaining

to him that his refusal would oblige me to apply for Mr. Inglewood's warrant, and a constable.

"We are come from Mr. Justice Inglewood's this morning," said Andrew, to enforce the menace;—"and I saw Archie Rutledge, the constable, as I came up by;—the country's no to be lawless as it has been, Mr. Syddall, letting rebels and Papists gang on as they best listed."

The threat of the law sounded dreadful in the old man's ears, conscious as he was of the suspicion under which he himself lay, from his religion and his devotion to Sir Hildebrand and his sons. He undid, with fear and trembling, one of the postern entrances, which was secured with many a bolt and bar, and humbly hoped that I would excuse him for fidelity in the discharge of his duty.—I reassured him, and told him I had the better opinion of him for his caution.

"Sae have not I," said Andrew; "Syddall is an auld sneck-drawer; he wadna be looking as white as a sheet, and his knees knocking thegither, unless it were for something mair than he's like to tell us."

"Lord forgive you, Mr. Fairservice," replied the butler, "to say such things of an old friend and fellow-servant!—Where"—following me humbly along the passage—"where would it be your honour's pleasure to have a fire lighted? I fear me you will find the house very dull and dreary—But perhaps you mean to ride back to Inglewood Place to dinner?"

"Light a fire in the library," I replied.

"In the library!" answered the old man;—"nobody has sat there this many a day, and the room smokes, for the daws have built in the chimney this spring, and there were no young men about the Hall to pull them down."

"Our ain reek's better than other folk's fire," said Andrew. "His honour likes the library;—he's nane o' your Papishers, that delight in blinded ignorance, Mr. Syddall."

Very reluctantly, as it appeared to me, the butler led the

way to the library, and, contrary to what he had given me to expect, the interior of the apartment looked as if it had been lately arranged, and made more comfortable than usual. There was a fire in the grate, which burned clearly, notwithstanding what Syddall had reported of the vent. Taking up the tongs, as if to arrange the wood, but rather perhaps to conceal his own confusion, the butler observed, "it was burning clear now, but had smoked woundily in the morning."

Wishing to be alone, till I recovered myself from the first painful sensations which everything around me recalled, I desired old Syddall to call the land-steward, who lived at about a quarter of a mile from the Hall. He departed with obvious reluctance. I next ordered Andrew to procure the attendance of a couple of stout fellows upon whom he could rely, the population around being Papists, and Sir Rashleigh, who was capable of any desperate enterprise, being in the neighbourhood. Andrew Fairservice undertook this task with great cheerfulness, and promised to bring me up from Trinlay-Knowe, "twa true-blue Presbyterians like himsel', that would face and out-face baith the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender—and blithe will I be o' their company mysel', for the very last night that I was at Osbaldistone Hall, the blight be on ilka blossom in my bit yard, if I didna see that very picture" (pointing to the full-length portrait of Miss Vernon's grandfather) "walking by moonlight in the garden! I tauld your honour I was fleyed wi' a bogle that night, but ye wadna listen to me.—I aye thought there was witchcraft and deevilry among the Papishers, but I ne'er saw't wi' bodily een till that awfu' night."

"Get along, sir," said I, "and bring the fellows you talk of; and see they have more sense than yourself, and are not frightened at their own shadow."

"I hae been counted as gude a man as my neighbours ere now," said Andrew petulantly; "but I dinna pretend

to deal wi' evil spirits." And so he made his exit, as Wardlaw, the land-steward, made his appearance.

He was a man of sense and honesty, without whose careful management my uncle would have found it difficult to have maintained himself a housekeeper so long as he did. He examined the nature of my right of possession carefully, and admitted it candidly. To any one else the succession would have been a poor one, so much was the land encumbered with debt and mortgage. Most of these, however, were already vested in my father's person, and he was in a train of acquiring the rest; his large gains by the recent rise of the funds having made it a matter of ease and convenience for him to pay off the debt which affected his patrimony.

I transacted much necessary business with Mr. Wardlaw, and detained him to dine with me. We preferred taking our repast in the library, although Syddall strongly recommended our removing to the stone hall, which he had put in order for the occasion. Meantime Andrew made his appearance with his true-blue recruits, whom he recommended in the highest terms, as "sober, decent men, weel founded in doctrinal points, and, above all, as bold as lions." I ordered them something to drink, and they left the room. I observed old Syddall shake his head as they went out, and insisted upon knowing the reason.

"I maybe cannot expect," he said, "that your honour should put confidence in what I say, but it is Heaven's truth for all that. Ambrose Wingfield is as honest a man as lives; but if there is a false knave in the country, it is his brother Lancie;—the whole country knows him to be a spy for Clerk Jobson on the poor gentlemen that have been in trouble.—But he's a Dissenter, and I suppose that's enough now-a-days."

Having thus far given vent to his feelings,—to which, however, I was little disposed to pay attention,—and having placed the wine on the table, the old butler left the apartment.

Mr. Wardlaw having remained with me until the evening was somewhat advanced, at length bundled up his papers, and removed himself to his own habitation, leaving me in that confused state of mind in which we can hardly say whether we desire company or solitude. I had not, however, the choice betwixt them; for I was left alone in the room of all others most calculated to inspire me with melancholy reflections.

As twilight was darkening the apartment, Andrew had the sagacity to advance his head at the door,—not to ask if I wished for lights, but to recommend them as a measure of precaution against the bogles which still haunted his imagination. I rejected his proffer somewhat peevishly, trimmed the wood-fire, and, placing myself in one of the large leathern chairs which flanked the old Gothic chimney, I watched unconsciously the bickering of the blaze which I had fostered. "And this," said I alone, "is the progress and the issue of human wishes! Nursed by the merest trifles, they are first kindled by fancy—nay, are fed upon the vapour of hope, till they consume the substance which they inflame; and man, and his hopes, passions, and desires sink into a worthless heap of embers and ashes!"

There was a deep sigh from the opposite side of the room, which seemed to reply to my reflections. I started up in amazement. Diana Vernon stood before me, resting on the arm of a figure so strongly resembling that of the portrait so often mentioned, that I looked hastily at the frame, expecting to see it empty. My first idea was, either that I had gone suddenly distracted, or that the spirits of the dead had arisen and been placed before me. A second glance convinced me of my being in my senses, and that the forms which stood before me were real and substantial. It was Diana herself, though paler and thinner than her former self; and it was no tenant of the grave who stood beside her, but Vaughan, or rather Sir Frederick Vernon,

in a dress made to imitate that of his ancestor, to whose picture his coutenance possessed a family resemblance. He was the first that spoke, for Diana kept her eyes fast fixed on the ground, and astonishment actually riveted my tongue to the roof of my mouth.

"We are your suppliants, Mr. Osbaldistone," he said, "and we claim the refuge and protection of your roof till we can pursue a journey where dungeons and death gape for me at every step.

"Surely," I articulated with great difficulty—"Miss Vernon cannot suppose—you, sir, cannot believe, that I have forgot your interference in my difficulties, or that I am capable of betraying any one, much less you?"

"I know it," said Sir Frederick; "yet it is with the most inexpressible reluctance that I impose on you a confidence, disagreeable perhaps—certainly dangerous—and which I would have specially wished to have conferred on some one else. But my fate, which has chased me through a life of perils and escapes, is now pressing me hard, and I have no alternative."

At this moment the door opened, and the voice of the officious Andrew was heard—"A'm bringin' in the caunles —ye can light them gin ye like—Can do is easy carried about wi' ane."

I ran to the door, which, as I hoped, I reached in time to prevent his observing who were in the apartment. I turned him out with hasty violence, shut the door after him, and locked it;—then instantly remembering his two companions below, knowing his talkative humour, and recollecting Syddall's remark, that one of them was supposed to be a spy, I followed him as fast as I could to the servants' hall, in which they were assembled. Andrew's tongue was loud as I opened the door, but my unexpected appearance silenced him.

"What is the matter with you, you fool?" said I; "you stare and look wild, as if you had seen a ghost."

"N—n—no—nothing," said Andrew;—"but your worship was pleased to be hasty."

"Because you disturbed me out of a sound sleep, you fool. Syddall tells me he cannot find beds for these good fellows to-night, and Mr. Wardlaw thinks there will be no occasion to detain them. Here is a crown-piece for them to drink my health, and thanks for their good-will. You will leave the Hall immediately, my good lads."

The men thanked me for my bounty, took the silver, and withdrew, apparently unsuspicious and contented. I watched their departure until I was sure they could have no further intercourse that night with honest Andrew. And so instantly had I followed on his heels, that I thought he could not have had time to speak two words with them before I interrupted him. But it is wonderful what mischief may be done by only two words. On this occasion they cost two lives.

Having made these arrangements, the best which occurred to me upon the pressure of the moment, to secure privacy for my guests, I returned to report my proceedings, and added, that I had desired Syddall to answer every summons, concluding that it was by his connivance they had been secreted in the Hall. Diana raised her eyes to thank me for the caution.

"You now understand my mystery," she said;—"you know, doubtless, how near and dear that relative is, who has so often found shelter here; and will be no longer surprised that Rashleigh, having such a secret at his command, should rule me with a rod of iron."

Her father added, "that it was their intention to trouble me with their presence as short a time as was possible."

I entreated the fugitives to waive every consideration but what affected their safety, and to rely on my utmost exertions to promote it. This led to an explanation of the circumstances under which they stood.

"I always suspected Rashleigh Osbaldistone," said Sir

Frederick; "but his conduct towards my unprotected child, which with difficulty I wrung from her, and his treachery in your father's affairs, made me hate and despise him. In our last interview I concealed not my sentiments, as I should in prudence have attempted to do; and in resentment of the scorn with which I treated him, he added treachery and apostasy to his catalogue of crimes. I at that time fondly hoped that his defection would be of little consequence. The Earl of Mar had a gallant army in Scotland, and Lord Derwentwater, with Forster, Kenmure, Winterton, and others, were assembling forces on the Border. As my connections with these English nobility and gentry were extensive, it was judged proper that I should accompany a detachment of Highlanders, who, under Brigadier MacIntosh, of Borlum, crossed the Firth of Forth, traversed the low country of Scotland, and united themselves on the Borders with the English insurgents. My daughter accompanied me through the perils and fatigues of a march so long and difficult."

"And she will never leave her dear father!" exclaimed Miss Vernon, clinging fondly to his arm.

"I had hardly joined our English friends, when I became sensible that our cause was lost. Our numbers diminished instead of increasing, nor were we joined by any except of our own persuasion. The Tories of the High Church remained in general undecided, and at length we were cooped up by a superior force in the little town of Preston. We defended ourselves resolutely for one day. On the next the hearts of our leaders failed, and they resolved to surrender at discretion. To yield myself up on such terms, were to have laid my head on the block. About twenty or thirty gentlemen were of my mind; we mounted our horses, and placed my daughter, who insisted on sharing my fate, in the centre of our little party. My companions, struck with her courage and filial piety, declared that they would die rather than leave her behind. We rode in a

body down a street called Fishergate, which leads to a marshy ground or meadow, extending to the river Ribble, through which one of our party promised to show us a good ford. This marsh had not been strongly invested by the enemy, so that we had only an affair with a patrol of Honeywood's dragoons, whom we dispersed and cut to pieces. We crossed the river, gained the high road to Liverpool, and then dispersed to seek several places of concealment and safety. My fortune led me to Wales, where there are many gentlemen of my religious and political opinions. I could not, however, find a safe opportunity of escaping by sea, and found myself obliged again to draw towards the North. A well-tried friend has appointed to meet me in this neighbourhood, and guide me to a seaport on the Solway, where a sloop is prepared to carry me from my native country for ever. As Osbaldistone Hall was for the present uninhabited, and under the charge of old Syddall, who had been our confidant on former occasions, we drew to it as to a place of known and secure refuge. I resumed a dress which had been used with good effect to scare the superstitious rustics, or domestics, who chanced at any time to see me; and we expected from time to time to hear by Syddall of the arrival of our friendly guide, when your sudden coming hither, and occupying this apartment, laid us under the necessity of submitting to your mercy."

Thus ended Sir Frederick's story, whose tale sounded to me like one told in a vision; and I could hardly bring myself to believe that I saw his daughter's form once more before me in flesh and blood, though with diminished beauty and sunk spirits. The buoyant vivacity with which she had resisted every touch of adversity had now assumed the air of composed and submissive, but dauntless resolution and constancy. Her father, though aware and jealous of the effect of her praises on my mind, could not forbear expatiating upon them.

"She has endured trials," he said, "which might have dignified the history of a martyr;—she has faced danger and death in various shapes; she has undergone toil and privation, from which men of the strongest frame would have shrunk;—she has spent the day in darkness, and the night in vigil, and has never breathed a murmur of weakness or complaint. In a word, Mr. Osbaldistone," he concluded, "she is a worthy offering to that God to whom" (crossing himself) "I shall dedicate her, as all that is left dear or precious to Frederick Vernon."

There was a silence after these words, of which I well understood the mournful import. The father of Diana was still as anxious to destroy my hopes of being united to her now as he had shown himself during our brief meeting in Scotland.

"We will now," said he to his daughter, "intrude no further on Mr. Osbaldistone's time, since we have acquainted him with the circumstances of the miserable guests who claim his protection."

I requested them to stay, and offered myself to leave the apartment. Sir Frederick observed, that my doing so could not but excite my attendant's suspicion; and that the place of their retreat was in every respect commodious, and furnished by Syddall with all they could possibly want. "We might perhaps have even contrived to remain there, concealed from your observation; but it would have been unjust to decline the most absolute reliance on your honour."

"You have done me but justice," I replied.—"To you, Sir Frederick, I am but little known; but Miss Vernon, I am sure, will bear me witness that——"

"I do not want my daughter's evidence," he said politely, but yet with an air calculated to prevent my addressing myself to Diana, "since I am prepared to believe all that is worthy of Mr. Francis Osbaldistone. Permit us now to retire; we must take repose when we can, since we are

absolutely uncertain when we may be called upon to renew our perilous journey."

He drew his daughter's arm within his, and, with a profound reverence, disappeared with her behind the tapestry.

I felt stunned and chilled as they retired. Imagination, dwelling on an absent object of affection, paints her not only in the fairest light, but in that in which we most desire to behold her. I had thought of Diana as she was, when her parting tear dropped on my cheek—when her parting token, received from the wife of MacGregor, augured her wish to convey into exile and conventual seclusion the remembrance of my affection. I saw her; and her cold, passive manner, expressive of little except composed melancholy, disappointed, and, in some degree, almost offended me. In the egotism of my feelings, I accused her of indifference—of insensibility. I upbraided her father with pride—with cruelty—with fanaticism,—forgetting that both were sacrificing their interest, and Diana her inclination, to the discharge of what they regarded as their duty.

Sir Frederick Vernon was a rigid Catholic, who thought the path of salvation too narrow to be trodden by an heretic; and Diana, to whom her father's safety had been for many years the principal and moving spring of thoughts, hopes, and actions, felt that she had discharged her duty in resigning to his will, not alone her property in the world, but the dearest affections of her heart. But it was not surprising that I could not, at such a moment, fully appreciate these honourable motives; yet my spleen sought no ignoble means of discharging itself.

"I am contemned, then," I said, when left to run over the tenor of Sir Frederick's communications—"I am contemned, and thought unworthy even to exchange words with her. Be it so; they shall not at least prevent me from watching over her safety. Here will I remain as an

outpost, and while under my roof, at least, no danger shall threaten her, if it be such as the arm of one determined man can avert."

I summoned Syddall to the library. He came, but came attended by the eternal Andrew, who, dreaming of great things in consequence of my taking possession of the Hall and the annexed estates, was resolved to lose nothing for want of keeping himself in view; and, as often happens to men who entertain selfish objects, overshot his mark, and rendered his attentions tedious and inconvenient.

His unrequired presence prevented me from speaking freely to Syddall, and I dared not send him away, for fear of increasing such suspicions as he might entertain from his former abrupt dismissal from the library. "I shall sleep here, sir," I said, giving them directions to wheel nearer to the fire an old-fashioned day-bed, or settee. "I have much to do, and shall go late to bed."

Syddall, who seemed to understand my look, offered to procure me the accommodation of a mattress and some bedding. I accepted his offer, dismissed my attendant, lighted a pair of candles, and desired that I might not be disturbed till seven in the ensuing morning.

The domestics retired, leaving me to my painful and ill-arranged reflections, until nature, worn out, should require some repose.

In a short time a slumber crept over my senses; still, however, though my senses slumbered, my soul was awake to the painful feelings of my situation, and my dreams were of mental anguish and external objects of terror.

I remember a strange agony, under which I conceived myself and Diana in the power of MacGregor's wife, and about to be precipitated from a rock into the lake; the signal was to be the discharge of a cannon, fired by Sir Frederick Veron, who, in the dress of a cardinal, officiated at the ceremony. Nothing could be more lively than the impression which I received of this imaginary scene. I

could paint, even at this moment, the mute and courageous submission expressed in Diana's features—the wild and distorted faces of the executioners, who crowded around us with "mopping and mowing"; grimaces ever changing, and each more hideous than that which preceded. I saw the rigid and inflexible fanaticism painted in the face of the father.—I saw him lift the fatal match—the deadly signal exploded.—It was repeated again and again and again, in rival thunders, by the echoes of the surrounding cliffs, and I awoke from fancied horror to real apprehension.

The sounds in my dream were not ideal. They reverberated on my waking ears, but it was two or three minutes ere I could collect myself so as distinctly to understand that they proceeded from a violent knocking at the gate. I leaped from my couch in great apprehension, took my sword under my arm, and hastened to forbid the admission of any one. But my route was necessarily circuitous, because the library looked not upon the quadrangle, but into the gardens. When I had reached a staircase, the windows of which opened upon the entrance court, I heard the feeble and intimidated tones of Syddall expostulating with rough voices, which demanded admittance, by the warrant of Justice Standish, and in the king's name, and threatened the old domestic with the heaviest penal consequences if he refused instant obedience. Ere they had ceased, I heard, to my unspeakable provocation, the voice of Andrew bidding Syddall stand aside, and let him open the door.

"If they come in King George's name, we have naething to fear—we hae spent baith blude and gowd for him.—We dinna need to darn ourselves like some folks, Mr. Syddall —we are neither Papists nor Jacobites, I trow."

It was in vain I accelerated my pace downstairs; I heard bolt after bolt withdrawn by the officious scoundrel, while all the time he was boasting his own and his master's loyalty to King George; and I could easily calculate that

the party must enter before I could arrive at the door to replace the bars. Devoting the back of Andrew Fairservice to the cudgel so soon as I should have time to pay him his deserts, I ran back to the library, barricaded the door as I best could, and hastened to that by which Diana and her father entered, and begged for instant admittance. Diana herself undid the door. She was ready dressed, and betrayed neither perturbation nor fear.

"Danger is so familiar to us," she said, "that we are always prepared to meet it. My father is already up—he is in Rashleigh's apartment. We will escape into the garden, and thence by the postern-gate (I have the key from Syddall in case of need) into the wood—I know its dingles better than any one now alive. Keep them a few minutes in play. And, dear, dear Frank, once more, fare-thee-well!"

She vanished like a meteor to join her father, and the intruders were rapping violently, and attempting to force the library door by the time I had returned into it.

"You robber dogs!" I exclaimed, wilfully mistaking the purpose of their disturbance; "if you do not instantly quit the house, I will fire my blunderbuss through the door."

"Fire a fule's bauble!" said Andrew Fairservice; "it's Mr. Clerk Jobson, with a legal warrant——"

"To search for, take, and apprehend," said the voice of that execrable pettifogger, "the bodies of certain persons in my warrant named, charged of high treason under the 13th of King William, Chapter third."

And the violence on the door was renewed. "I am rising, gentlemen," said I, desirous to gain as much time as possible.—"Commit no violence—give me leave to look at your warrant, and, if it is formal and legal, I shall not oppose it."

"God save great George our King!" ejaculated Andrew. "I tauld ye that ye would find nae Jacobites here."

Spinning out the time as much as possible, I was at

length compelled to open the door, which they would otherwise have forced.

Mr. Jobson entered, with several assistants, among whom I discovered the younger Wingfield, to whom, doubtless, he was obliged for his information, and exhibited his warrant, directed not only against Frederick Vernon, an attainted traitor, but also against Diana Vernon, spinster, and Francis Osbaldistone, gentleman, accused of misprision of treason. It was a case in which resistance would have been madness; I therefore, after capitulating for a few minutes' delay, surrendered myself a prisoner.

I had next the mortification to see Jobson go straight to the chamber of Miss Vernon, and I learned that from thence, without hesitation or difficulty, he went to the room where Sir Frederick had slept. "The hare has stolen away," said the brute, "but her form is warm—the greyhounds will have her by the haunches yet."

A scream from the garden announced that he prophesied too truly. In the course of five minutes, Rashleigh entered the library with Sir Frederick Vernon and his daughter as prisoners. "The fox," he said, "knew his old earth, but he forgot it could be stopped by a careful huntsman.—I had not forgot the garden-gate, Sir Frederick—or, if that title suits you better, most noble Lord Beauchamp."

"Rashleigh," said Sir Frederick, "thou art a detestable villain!"

"I better deserved the name, Sir Knight, or my lord, when, under the direction of an able tutor, I sought to introduce civil war into the bosom of a peaceful country. But I have done my best," said he, looking upwards, "to atone for my errors."

I could hold no longer. I had designed to watch their proceedings in silence, but I felt that I must speak or die. "If hell," I said, "has one complexion more hideous than another, it is where villany is masked by hypocrisy."

"Ha! my gentle cousin," said Rashleigh, holding a

candle towards me, and surveying me from head to foot "right welcome to Osbaldistone Hall!—I can forgive your spleen—it is hard to lose an estate and a mistress in one night; for we shall take possession of this poor manor-house in the name of the lawful heir, Sir Rashleigh Osbaldistone."

Rashleigh strode once or twice through the room, came up to the side-table, on which wine was still standing, and poured out a large glass with a trembling hand; but when he saw that we observed his tremor, he suppressed it by a strong effort, and, looking at us with fixed and daring composure, carried the bumper to his head without spilling a drop. "It is my father's old Burgundy," he said, looking to Jobson; "I am glad there is some of it left.—You will get proper persons to take care of the house and property in my name, and turn out the doating old butler, and that foolish Scotch rascal. Meanwhile we will convey these persons to a more proper place of custody. I have provided the old family coach for your convenience," he said, "though I am not ignorant that even the lady could brave the night-air on foot or on horseback, were the errand more to her mind."

Andrew wrung his hands.—"I only said that my master was surely speaking to a ghaist in the library—and the villain Lancie to betray an auld friend, that sang aff the same psalm-book wi' him every Sabbath for twenty years!"

He was turned out of the house, together with Syddall, without being allowed to conclude his lamentation. His expulsion, however, led to some singular consequences. Resolving, according to his own story, to go down for the night where Mother Simpson would give him a lodging for old acquaintance' sake, he had just got clear of the avenue, and into the old wood, as it was called, though it was now used as a pasture-ground rather than woodland, when he suddenly lighted on a drove of Scotch cattle, which were lying there to repose themselves after the day's journey.

At this Andrew was in no way surprised, it being the well-known custom of his countrymen, who take care of those droves, to quarter themselves after night upon the best unenclosed grass-ground they can find, and depart before daybreak to escape paying for their night's lodgings. But he was both surprised and startled, when a Highlander, springing up, accused him of disturbing the cattle, and refused him to pass forward till he had spoken to his master. The mountaineer conducted Andrew into a thicket, where he found three or four more of his countrymen. "And," said Andrew, "I saw sune they were ower mony men for the drove; and from the questions they put to me, I judged they had other tow on their rock."

They questioned him closely about all that had passed at Osbaldistone Hall, and seemed surprised and concerned at the report he made to them.

"And troth," said Andrew, "I tauld them a' I ken'd; for dirks and pistols were what I could never refuse information to in a' my life."

They talked in whispers among themselves, and at length collected their cattle together, and drove them close up to the entrance of the avenue, which might be half a mile distant from the house. They proceeded to drag together some felled trees which lay in the vicinity, so as to make a temporary barricade across the road, about fifteen yards beyond the avenue. It was now near daybreak, and there was a pale eastern gleam mingled with the fading moonlight, so that objects could be discovered with some distinctness. The lumbering sound of a coach drawn by four horses, and escorted by six men on horseback, was heard coming up the avenue. The Highlanders listened attentively. The carriage contained Mr. Jobson and his unfortunate prisoners. The escort consisted of Rashleigh, and of several horsemen, peace-officers and their assistants. So soon as we had passed the gate at the head of the avenue, it was shut behind the cavalcade by a Highlandman,

stationed there for that purpose. At the same time the carriage was impeded in its farther progress by the cattle, amongst which we were involved, and by the barricade in front. Two of the escort dismounted to remove the felled trees, which they might think were left there by accident or carelessness. The others began with their whips to drive the cattle from the road.

"Who dare abuse our cattle?" said a rough voice.—"Shoot him, Angus!"

Rashleigh instantly called out—"A rescue! a rescue!" and, firing a pistol, wounded the man who spoke.

"*Claymore!*" cried the leader of the Highlanders, and a scuffle instantly commenced. The officers of the law, surprised at so sudden an attack, and not usually possessing the most desperate bravery, made but an imperfect defence, considering the superiority of their numbers. Some attempted to ride back to the Hall, but, on a pistol being fired from behind the gate, they conceived themselves surrounded, and at length galloped off in different directions. Rashleigh, meanwhile, had dismounted, and on foot had maintained a desperate and single-handed conflict with the leader of the band. The window of the carriage, on my side, permitted me to witness it. At length Rashleigh dropped.

"Will you ask forgiveness for the sake of God, King James, and auld friendship?" said a voice which I knew right well.

"No, never!" said Rashleigh firmly.

"Then, traitor, die in your treason!" retorted MacGregor, and plunged his sword in his prostrate antagonist.

In the next moment he was at the carriage door—handed out Miss Vernon, assisted her father and me to alight, and dragging out the attorney, head foremost, threw him under the wheel.

"Mr. Osbaldistone," he said, in a whisper, "you have nothing to fear—I must look after those who have.—Your

friends will soon be in safety.—Farewell, and forget not the MacGregor."

He whistled—his band gathered round him, and, hurrying Diana and her father along with him, they were almost instantly lost in the glades of the forest. The coachman and postillion had abandoned their horses, and fled at the first discharge of firearms; but the animals, stopped by the barricade, remained perfectly still; and well for Jobson that they did so, for the slightest motion would have dragged the wheel over his body. My first object was to relieve him, for such was the rascal's terror that he never could have risen by his own exertions. I next commanded him to observe, that I had neither taken part in the rescue, nor availed myself of it to make my escape, and enjoined him to go down to the Hall, and call some of his party, who had been left there, to assist the wounded.—But Jobson's fears had so mastered and controlled every faculty of his mind, that he was totally incapable of moving. I now resolved to go myself, but in my way I stumbled over the body of a man, as I thought, dead or dying. It was, however, Andrew Fairservice, as well and whole as ever he was in his life, who had only taken this recumbent posture to avoid the slashes, stabs, and pistol-balls, which for a moment or two were flying in various directions. I was so glad to find him, that I did not inquire how he came thither, but instantly commanded his assistance.

Rashleigh was our first object. He groaned when I approached him, as much through spite as through pain, and shut his eyes, as if determined, like Iago, to speak no word more. We lifted him into the carriage, and performed the same good office to another wounded man of his party, who had been left on the field. I then with difficulty made Jobson understand that he must enter the coach also, and support Sir Rashleigh upon the seat. He obeyed, but with an air as if he but half comprehended my meaning. Andrew and I turned the horses' heads round, and, open-

ing the gate of the avenue, led them slowly back to Osbaldistone Hall.

Some fugitives had already reached the Hall by circuitous routes, and alarmed its garrison by the news that Sir Rashleigh, Clerk Jobson, and all their escort, save they who escaped to tell the tale, had been cut to pieces at the head of the avenue by a whole regiment of wild Highlanders. When we reached the mansion, therefore, we heard such a buzz as arises when bees are alarmed, and mustering in their hives. Mr. Jobson, however, who had now in some measure come to his senses, found voice enough to make himself known. He was the more anxious to be released from the carriage, as one of his companions (the peace-officer) had, to his inexpressible terror, expired by his side with a hideous groan.

Sir Rashleigh Osbaldistone was still alive, but so dreadfully wounded that the bottom of the coach was filled with his blood, and long traces of it left from the entrance-door into the stone hall, where he was placed in a chair, some attempting to stop the bleeding with cloths, while others called for a surgeon, and no one seemed willing to go to fetch one. "Torment me not," said the wounded man—"I know no assistance can avail me—I am a dying man." He raised himself in his chair, though the damps and chill of death were already on his brow, and spoke with a firmness which seemed beyond his strength. "Cousin Francis," he said, "draw near to me." I approached him as he requested.—"I wish you only to know that the pangs of death do not alter one iota of my feelings towards you. I hate you!" he said, the expression of rage throwing a hideous glare into the eyes which were soon to be closed for ever—"I hate you with a hatred as intense, now while I lie bleeding and dying before you, as if my foot trode on your neck."

"I have given you no cause, sir," I replied,—"and for your own sake I could wish your mind in a better temper"

"You *have* given me cause," he rejoined. "In love, in ambition, in the paths of interest, you have crossed and blighted me at every turn. I was born to be the honour of my father's house—I have been its disgrace—and all owing to you. My very patrimony has become yours.—Take it," he said, "and may the curse of a dying man cleave to it!"

In a moment after he had uttered this frightful wish, he fell back in the chair; his eyes became glazed, his limbs stiffened, but the grin and glare of mortal hatred survived even the last gasp of life. I will dwell no longer on so painful a picture, nor say any more of the death of Rashleigh, than that it gave me access to my rights of inheritance without further challenge, and that Jobson found himself compelled to allow that the ridiculous charge of misprision of high treason was got up on an affidavit which he made with the sole purpose of favouring Rashleigh's views, and removing me from Osbaldistone Hall. The rascal's name was struck off the list of attorneys, and he was reduced to poverty and contempt.

I returned to London when I had put my affairs in order at Osbaldistone Hall, and felt happy to escape from a place which suggested so many painful recollections. My anxiety was now acute to learn the fate of Diana and her father. A French gentleman who came to London on commercial business, was entrusted with a letter to me from Miss Vernon, which put my mind at rest respecting their safety.

It gave me to understand that the opportune appearance of MacGregor and his party was not fortuitous. The Scottish nobles and gentry engaged in the insurrection, as well as those of England, were particularly anxious to further the escape of Sir Frederick Vernon, who, as an old and trusted agent of the house of Stuart, was possessed of matter enough to have ruined half Scotland. Rob Roy, of whose sagacity and courage they had known so many proofs, was the person whom they pitched upon to assist

his escape, and the place of meeting was fixed at Osbaldistone Hall. You have already heard how nearly the plan had been disconcerted by the unhappy Rashleigh. It succeeded, however, perfectly; for when once Sir Frederick and his daughter were again at large, they found horses prepared for them, and, by MacGregor's knowledge of the country—for every part of Scotland, and of the North of England, was familiar to him—were conducted to the western sea-coast, and safely embarked for France. The same gentleman told me that Sir Frederick was not expected to survive for many months a lingering disease, the consequence of late hardships and privations. His daughter was placed in a convent, and although it was her father's wish she should take the veil, he was understood to refer the matter entirely to her own inclinations.

When these news reached me, I frankly told the state of my affections to my father, who was not a little startled at the idea of my marrying a Roman Catholic. But he was very desirous to see me "settled in life," as he called it; and he was sensible that, in joining him with heart and hand in his commercial labours, I had sacrificed my own inclinations. After a brief hesitation, and several questions asked and answered to his satisfaction, he broke out with—"I little thought a son of mine should have been lord of Osbaldistone Manor, and far less that he should go to a French convent for a spouse. But so dutiful a daughter cannot but prove a good wife. You have worked at the desk to please me, Frank; it is but fair you should wive to please yourself."

How I sped in my wooing I need not tell. I lived long and happily with Diana.

—Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy.*

XXVI

The King's Drawing-room

A HUNDRED years ago the King's drawing-room was open almost every day to his nobility and gentry; and loyalty—especially since the war had began—could gratify itself a score of times in a month with the august sight of the sovereign. A wise avoidance of the enemy's ships of war, a gracious acknowledgment of the inestimable loss the British Isles would suffer by the seizure of the Royal person at sea, caused the monarch to forego those visits to his native Hanover which were so dear to his Royal heart, and compelled him to remain, it must be owned unwillingly, amongst his loving Britons. A Hanoverian lady, however, whose virtues had endeared her to the Prince, strove to console him for his enforced absence from Herrenhausen. And from the lips of the Countess of Walmoden (on whom the imperial beneficence had gracefully conferred a high title of British honour) the revered Defender of the Faith could hear the accents of his native home.

To this beloved sovereign, Mr. Warrington requested his uncle, an assiduous courtier, to present him: and as Mr. Lambert had to go to Court likewise, and thank His Majesty for his promotion, the two gentlemen made the journey to Kensington together, engaging a hackney-coach for the purpose, as my Lord Wrotham's carriage was now wanted by its rightful owner, who had returned to his house in town. They alighted at Kensington Palace Gate, where the sentries on duty knew and saluted the good General,

and hence modestly made their way on foot to the summer residence of the sovereign. Walking under the portico of the palace, they entered the gallery which leads to the great black marble staircase (which hath been so richly decorated and painted by Mr. Kent), and then passed through several rooms richly hung with tapestry and adorned with pictures and bustos, until they came to the King's great drawing-room, where that famous "Venus" by Titian is, and, amongst other masterpieces, the picture of "St. Francis adoring the infant Saviour," performed by Sir Peter Paul Rubens; and here, with the rest of the visitors to the Court, the gentlemen waited until His Majesty issued from his private apartments, where he was in conference with certain personages who were called in the newspaper language of that day His M-j—ty's M-n-st-rs.

George Warrington, who had never been in a palace before, had leisure to admire the place, and regard the people round him. He saw fine pictures for the first time too, and I dare say delighted in that charming piece of Sir Anthony Vandyke representing King Charles the First, his Queen and Family, and the noble picture of "Esther before Ahasuerus," painted by Tintoret, and in which all the figures are dressed in the magnificent Venetian habit. With the contemplation of these works he was so enraptured, that he scarce heard all the remarks of his good friend the General, who was whispering into his young companion's almost heedless ear the names of some of the personages round about them.

"Yonder," says Mr. Lambert, "are two of my Lords of the Admiralty, Mr. Gilbert Elliot and Admiral Boscawen: *your* Boscawen, whose fleet fired the first gun in your waters two years ago. That stout gentleman all belaced with gold is Mr. Fox, that was Minister, and is now content to be Paymaster with a great salary."

"He carries the *auri fames* on his person. Why, his waistcoat is a perfect Potosi!" says George.

"*Alieni appetens*—how goes the text? He loves to get money and to spend it," continues General Lambert. "Yon is my Lord Chief Justice Willes, talking to my Lord of Salisbury, Doctor Hoadley, who, if he serve his God as he serves his King, will be translated to some very high promotion in heaven. He belongs to your grandfather's time, and was loved by Dick Steele and hated by the Dean. With them is my Lord of London, the learned Doctor Sherlock. My Lords of the lawn sleeves have lost half their honours now. I remember when I was a boy in my mother's hand, she made me go down on my knees to the Bishop of Rochester; him who went over the water, and became Minister to somebody who shall be nameless—Perkin's Bishop. That handsome fair man is Admiral Smith. He was president of poor Byng's court martial, and strove in vain to get him off his penalty; Tom of Ten Thousand they call him in the fleet. The French Ambassador had him broke, when he was a lieutenant, for making a French man-of-war lower topsails to him, and the King made Tom a captain the next day. That tall haughty looking man is my Lord George Sackville, who, now I am a Major-General myself, will treat me somewhat better than a footman. I wish my stout old Blakeney were here; he is the soldiers' darling, and as kind and brave as yonder poker of a nobleman is brave and—— I am your lordship's very humble servant. This is a young gentleman who is just from America, and was in Braddock's sad business two years ago."

"Oh, indeed!" says the poker of a nobleman. "I have the honour of speaking to Mr.——"

"To Major-General Lambert, at your lordship's service, and who was in His Majesty's some time before you entered it. That, Mr. Warrington, is the first commoner in England, Mr. Speaker Onslow. Where is your uncle? I shall have to present you myself to His Majesty if Sir Miles delays much longer." As he spoke the worthy

General addressed himself entirely to his young friend, making no sort of account of his colleague, who stalked away with a scared look as if amazed at the other's audacity. A hundred years ago, a nobleman was a nobleman, and expected to be admired as such.

Sir Miles's red waistcoat appeared in sight presently, and many cordial greetings passed between him, his nephew, and General Lambert: for Sir Miles was the most affectionate of men. So the General had quitted my Lord Wrotham's house? It was time, as his lordship himself wished to occupy it? Very good; but consider what a loss for the neighbours!

"We miss you, we positively miss you, my dear General," cries Sir Miles. "My daughters were in love with those lovely young ladies—upon my word they were; and my Lady Warrington and my girls were debating over and over again how they should find an opportunity of making the acquaintance of your charming family. We feel as if we were old friends already; indeed we do, General, if you will permit me the liberty of saying so; and we love you, if I may be allowed to speak frankly, on account of your friendship and kindness to our dear nephews: though we were a little jealous, I own a little jealous of them, because they went so often to see you. Often and often have I said to my Lady Warrington, 'My dear, why don't we make acquaintance with the General? Why don't we ask him and his ladies to come over in a family way and dine with some other plain country gentlefolks?' Carry my most sincere respects to Mrs. Lambert, I pray, sir; and thank her for her goodness to these young gentlemen. My own flesh and blood, sir; my dear, dear brother's boys!" He passed his hand across his manly eyes: he was choking almost with generous and affectionate emotion.

Whilst they were discoursing—George Warrington the while restraining his laughter with admirable gravity—the door of the King's apartments opened, and the pages

entered, preceding His Majesty. He was followed by his burly son, His Royal Highness the Duke, a very corpulent prince, with a coat and face of blazing scarlet: behind them came various gentlemen and officers of state, among whom George at once recognised the famous Mr. Secretary Pitt, by his tall stature, his eagle eye and beak, his grave and majestic presence. As I see that solemn figure passing, even a hundred years off, I protest I feel a present awe, and a desire to take my hat off. I am not frightened at George the Second; nor are my eyes dazzled by the portentous appearance of His Royal Highness the Duke of Culloden and Fontenoy; but the Great Commoner, the terrible Cornet of Horse! His figure bestrides our narrow isle of a century back like a Colossus; and I hush as he passes in his gouty shoes, his thunderbolt hand wrapped in flannel. Perhaps as we see him now, issuing with dark looks from the Royal closet, angry scenes have been passing between him and his august master. He has been boring that old monarch for hours with prodigious long speeches, full of eloquence, voluble with the noblest phrases upon the commonest topics; but, it must be confessed, utterly repulsive to the little shrewd old gentleman, "at whose feet he lays himself," as the phrase is, and who has the most thorough dislike for fine *boedry* and for fine *brose* too! The sublime Minister passes solemnly through the crowd; the company ranges itself respectfully round the wall, and His Majesty walks round the circle, his Royal son lagging a little behind, and engaging select individuals in conversation for his own part.

The monarch is a little keen fresh-coloured old man, with very protruding eyes, attired in plain old-fashioned snuff-coloured clothes and brown stockings, his only ornament the blue ribbon of his Order of the Garter. He speaks in a German accent, but with ease, shrewdness, and simplicity, addressing those individuals whom he has a mind to notice, or passing on with a bow. He knew Mr. Lambert well,

who had served under His Majesty at Dettingen, and with his Royal son in Scotland, and he congratulated him good-humouredly on his promotion.

"It is not always," His Majesty was pleased to say, "that we can do as we like; but I was glad when, for once, I could give myself that pleasure in your case, General; for my army contains no better officer as you."

The veteran blushed and bowed, deeply gratified at this speech. Meanwhile, the Best of Monarchs was looking at Sir Miles Warrington (whom His Majesty knew perfectly, as the eager recipient of all favours from all Ministers), and at the young gentleman by his side.

"Who is this?" the Defender of the Faith condescended to ask, pointing towards George Warrington, who stood before his sovereign in a respectful attitude, clad in poor Harry's best embroidered suit.

With the deepest reverence Sir Miles informed his King, that the young gentleman was his nephew, Mr. George Warrington, of Virginia, who asked leave to pay his humble duty.

"This, then, is the other brother?" the venerated Prince deigned to observe. "He came in time, else the other brother would have spent all the money. My Lord Bishop of Salisbury, why do you come out in this bitter weather? You had much better stay at home!" and with this, the revered wielder of Britannia's sceptre passed on to other lords and gentlemen of his Court. Sir Miles Warrington was deeply affected at the Royal condescension. He clapped his nephew's hands. "God bless you, my boy," he cried; "I told you that you would see the greatest monarch and the finest gentleman in the world. Is he not so, my Lord Bishop?"

"That, that he is!" cried his lordship, clasping his ruffled hands, and turning his fine eyes up to the sky, "the best of princes and of men."

"That is Master Louis, my Lady Yarmouth's favourite

nephew," says Lambert, pointing to a young gentleman who stood with a crowd round him; and presently the stout Duke of Cumberland came up to our little group.

His Royal Highness held out his hand to his old companion in arms. "Congratulate you on your promotion, Lambert," he said good-naturedly. Sir Miles Warrington's eyes were ready to burst out of his head with rapture.

"I owe it, sir, to your Royal Highness's good offices," said the grateful General.

"Not at all; not at all: ought to have had it a long time before. Always been a good officer; perhaps there'll be some employment for you soon. This is the gentleman whom James Wolfe introduced to me?"

"His brother, sir."

"You were with poor Ned Braddock in America—a prisoner, and lucky enough to escape. Come and see me, sir, in Pall Mall. Bring him to my levée, Lambert." And the broad back of the Royal Prince was turned to our friends.

"It is raining! You came on foot, General Lambert? You and George must come home in my coach. You must and *shall* come home with me, I say. By George, you must! I'll have no denial," cried the enthusiastic baronet; and he drove George and the General back to Hill Street, and presented the latter to my Lady Warrington and his darlings, Flora and Dora, and insisted upon their partaking of a collation, as they must be hungry after their ride. "What, there is only cold mutton? Well, an old soldier can eat cold mutton. And a good glass of my Lady Warrington's own cordial, prepared with her own hands, will keep the cold wind out. Delicious cordial! Capital mutton! Our own, my dear General," says the hospitable baronet, "our own from the country, six years old if a day. We keep a plain table; but all the Warrington's since the Conqueror have been remarkable for their love of mutton; and our meal may look a little scanty, and is, for we are

plain people, and I am obliged to keep my rascals of servants on board wages. Can't give them seven-year-old mutton, you know."

Sir Miles, in his nephew's presence and hearing, described to his wife and daughters George's reception at Court in such flattering terms that George hardly knew himself, or the scene at which he had been present, or how to look his uncle in the face, or how to contradict him before his family in the midst of the astonishing narrative he was relating. Lambert sat by for a while with open eyes. He, too, had been at Kensington. He had seen none of the wonders which Sir Miles described.

—W. M. THACKERAY, *Virginians.*

XXVII

How the Gage of the Guelphs was Taken up

"I HAVE often heard," said Darsie Latimer to his sister, "that a female, supposed to be a man in disguise,—and yet, Lilias, you do not look very masculine,—had taken up the champion's gauntlet at the present King's coronation, and left in its place a gage of battle, with a paper, offering to accept the combat, provided a fair field should be allowed for it. I have hitherto considered it as an idle tale. I little thought how nearly I was interested in the actors of a scene so daring—How could you have courage to go through with it?"

"Had I had leisure for reflection," answered his sister, "I should have refused, from a mixture of principle and of fear. But, like many people, who do daring actions, I went on because I had not time to think of retreating. The matter was little known, and it is said the King had commanded that it should not be farther enquired into;—from prudence, as I suppose, and lenity, though my uncle chooses to ascribe the forbearance of the Elector of Hanover, as he calls him, sometimes to pusillanimity, and sometimes to a presumptuous scorn of the faction who opposes his title."

"And have your subsequent agencies under this frantic enthusiast," said Darsie, "equalled this in danger?"

"No," replied his sister; "but I got so terrible a

specimen of my uncle's determination of character, before I had been acquainted with him for much more than a week, that it taught me at what risk I should contradict his humour. I will tell you the circumstances; for it will better teach you to appreciate the romantic and resolved nature of his character, than any thing which I could state of his rashness and enthusiasm."

"After I had been many a long year at the convent, I was removed from thence, and placed with a meagre old Scottish lady of high rank, the daughter of an unfortunate person, whose head had in the year 1715 been placed on Temple Bar. She subsisted on a small pension from the French Court, aided by an occasional gratuity from the Stewarts; to which the annuity paid for my board formed a desirable addition. She was not ill-tempered, nor very covetous—neither beat me nor starved me—but she was so completely trammelled by rank and prejudices, so awfully profound in genealogy, and so bitterly keen, poor lady, in British politics, that I sometimes thought it pity that the Hanoverians, who murdered, as she used to tell me, her poor dear father, had left his dear daughter in the land of the living. Delighted, therefore, was I, when my uncle made his appearance, and abruptly announced his purpose of conveying me to England. My extravagant joy at the idea of leaving Lady Rachel Rougedragon, was somewhat qualified by observing the melancholy look, lofty demeanour, and commanding tone of my near relative. He held more communication with me on the journey, however, than consisted with his taciturn demeanour in general, and seemed anxious to ascertain my tone of character, and particularly in point of courage. Now, though I am a tamed Redgauntlet, yet I have still so much of our family spirit as enables me to be as composed in danger as most of my sex: and upon two occasions in the course of our journey—a threatened attack by banditti, and the overturn of our carriage—I had the fortune so to conduct myself, as

to convey to my uncle a very favourable idea of my intrepidity. Probably this encouraged him to put in execution the singular scheme which he had in agitation.

"Ere we reached London we changed our means of conveyance, and altered the route by which we approached the city, more than once; then, like a hare which doubles repeatedly at some distance from the seat she means to occupy, and at last leaps into her form from a distance as great as she can clear by a spring, we made a forced march, and landed in private and obscure lodgings in a little old street in Westminster, not far distant from the Cloisters.

"On the morning of the day on which we arrived my uncle went abroad, and did not return for some hours. Meantime I had no other amusement than to listen to the tumult of noises which succeeded each other, or reigned in confusion together during the whole morning. Paris I had thought the most noisy capital in the world, but Paris seemed midnight silence compared to London. Cannon thundered near and at a distance—drums, trumpets, and military music of every kind, rolled, flourished, and pierced the clouds, almost without intermission. To fill up the concert, bells pealed incessantly from a hundred steeples. The acclamations of an immense multitude were heard from time to time, like the roaring of a mighty ocean, and all this without my being able to glean the least idea of what was going on, for the windows of our apartment looked upon a waste back-yard, which seemed totally deserted. My curiosity became extreme, for I was satisfied, at length, that it must be some festival of the highest order which called forth these incessant sounds.

"My uncle at length returned, and with him a man of an exterior singularly unprepossessing. I need not describe him to you, for—do not look round—he rides behind us at this moment."

"That respectable person, Mr. Cristal Nixon, I suppose?" said Darsie.

"The same," answered Lilias; "make no gesture that may intimate we are speaking of him."

Darsie signified that he understood her, and she pursued her relation.

"They were both in full dress, and my uncle, taking a bundle from Nixon, said to me, 'Lilias, I am come to carry you to see a grand ceremony—put on as hastily as you can the dress you will find in that parcel, and prepare to attend me.' I found a female dress, splendid and elegant, but somewhat bordering upon the antique fashion. It might be that of England, I thought, and I went to my apartment full of curiosity, and dressed myself with all speed.

"My uncle surveyed me with attention—'She may pass for one of the flower-girls,' he said to Nixon, who only answered with a nod.

"We left the house together, and such was their knowledge of the lanes, courts, and bypaths, that though there was the roar of a multitude in the broad streets, those which we traversed were silent and deserted; and the strollers whom we met, tired of gazing upon gayer figures, scarcely honoured us with a passing look, although, at any other time, we should, among these vulgar suburbs, have attracted a troublesome share of observation. We crossed at length a broad street, where many soldiers were on guard, while others, exhausted with previous duty, were eating, drinking, smoking, and sleeping beside their piled arms.

"'One day, Nixon,' whispered my uncle, 'we will make these redcoated gentry stand to their muskets more watchfully.'

"'Or it will be the worse for them,' answered his attendant, in a voice as unpleasant as his physiognomy.

"Unquestioned and unchallenged by any one, we crossed among the guards, and Nixon tapped thrice at a small postern door in a huge ancient building which was straight

MY UNCLE SURVEYED ME WITH ATTENTION

before us. It opened, and we entered without my perceiving by whom we were admitted. A few dark and narrow passages at length conveyed us into an immense Gothic hall, the magnificence of which baffles my powers of description.

"It was illuminated by ten thousand wax lights, whose splendour at first dazzled my eyes, coming as we did from these dark and secret avenues. But when my sight began to become steady, how shall I describe what I beheld? Beneath were huge ranges of tables, occupied by princes and nobles in their robes of state—high officers of the crown wearing their dresses and badges of authority—reverend prelates and judges, the sages of the church and law, in their more sombre, yet not less awful robes—with others whose antique and striking costume announced their importance, though I could not even guess who they might be. But at length the truth burst on me at once—it was, and the murmurs around confirmed it, the Coronation Feast. At a table above the rest, and extending across the upper end of the hall, sat enthroned the youthful Sovereign himself, surrounded by the princes of the blood, and other dignitaries, and receiving the suit and homage of his subjects. Heralds and pursuivants, blazing in their fantastic yet splendid armorial habits, and pages of honour, gorgeously arrayed in the garb of other days, waited upon the princely banqueters. In the galleries with which this spacious hall was surrounded, shone all, and more than all, that my poor imagination could conceive, of what was brilliant in riches, or captivating in beauty. Countless rows of ladies, whose diamonds, jewels, and splendid attire, were their least powerful charms, looked down from their lofty seats on the rich scene beneath, themselves forming a show as dazzling and as beautiful as that of which they were spectators. Under these galleries, and behind the banqueting tables, were a multitude of gentlemen, dressed as if to attend a court, but whose garb, although rich enough to

have adorned a royal drawing-room, could not distinguish them in such a high scene as this. Amongst these we wandered for a few minutes, undistinguished and unregarded. I saw several young persons dressed as I was, so was under no embarrassment from the singularity of my habit, and only rejoiced, as I hung on my uncle's arm, at the magical splendeur of such a scene, and at his goodness for procuring me the pleasure of beholding it.

"By-and-by, I perceived that my uncle had acquaintances among those who were under the galleries, and seemed, like ourselves, to be mere spectators of the solemnity, They recognised each other with a single word, sometimes only with a gripe of the hand—exchanged some private signs, doubtless—and gradually formed a little group, in the centre of which we were placed.

"'Is it not a grand sight, Lilias?' said my uncle. 'All the noble, and all the wise, and all the wealthy of Britain, are there assembled.'

"'It is indeed,' said I, 'all that my mind could have fancied of regal power and splendour.'

"'Girl,' he whispered,—and my uncle can make his whispers as terribly emphatic as his thundering voice or his blighting look,—'all that is noble and worthy in this fair land are there assembled—but it is to bend like slaves and sycophants before the throne of a new usurper.'

"I looked at him, and the dark hereditary frown of our unhappy ancestor was black upon his brow.

"'For God's sake,' I whispered, 'consider where we are.'

"'Fear nothing,' he said; 'we are surrounded by friends.'—As he proceeded, his strong and muscular frame shook with suppressed agitation.—'See,' he said, 'yonder bends Norfolk, renegade to his Catholic faith; there stoops the Bishop of ——, traitor to the Church of England; and, —shame of shames! yonder the gigantic form of Errol bows his head before the grandson of his father's murderer!

But a sign shall be seen this night amongst them—*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, shall be read on these walls, as distinctly as the spectral handwriting made them visible on those of Belshazzar!'

"'For God's sake,' said I, dreadfully alarmed, 'it is impossible you can meditate violence in such a presence!'

"'None is intended, fool,' he answered, 'nor can the slightest mischance happen, provided you will rally your boasted courage, and obey my directions. But do it coolly and quickly, for there are an hundred lives at stake.'

"'Alas! what can I do?' I asked in the utmost terror.

"'Only be prompt to execute my bidding,' said he; 'it is but to lift a glove—Here, hold this in your hand—throw the train of your dress over it, be firm, composed, and ready—or, at all events, I step forward myself.'

"'If there is no violence designed,' I said, taking, mechanically, the iron glove he put into my hand.

"I could not conceive his meaning; but, in the excited state of mind in which I beheld him, I was convinced that disobedience on my part would lead to some wild explosion. I felt, from the emergency of the occasion, a sudden presence of mind, and resolved to do anything that might avert violence and bloodshed. I was not long held in suspense. A loud flourish of trumpets, and the voice of heralds, were mixed with the clatter of horses' hoofs, while a champion, armed at all points, like those I had read of in romances, attended by squires, pages, and the whole retinue of chivalry, pranced forward, mounted upon a barbed steed. His challenge, in defiance of all who dared impeach the title of the new sovereign, was recited aloud—once, and again.

"'Rush in at the third sounding,' said my uncle to me; 'bring me the parader's gage, and leave mine in lieu of it.'

"I could not see how this was to be done, as we were surrounded by people on all sides. But, at the third

sounding of the trumpets, a lane opened as if by word of command, betwixt me and the champion, and my uncle's voice said, 'Now, Lilias, NOW!'

"With a swift and yet steady step, and with a presence of mind for which I have never since been able to account, I discharged the perilous commission. I was hardly seen, I believe, as I exchanged the pledges of battle, and in an instant retired. 'Nobly done, my girl!' said my uncle, at whose side I found myself, shrouded as I was before, by the interposition of the bystanders. 'Cover our retreat, gentlemen,' he whispered to those around him.

"Room was made for us to approach the wall, which seemed to open, and we were again involved in the dark passages through which we had formerly passed. In a small anteroom, my uncle stopped, and hastily muffling me in a mantle which was lying there, we passed the guards—threaded the labyrinth of empty streets and courts, and reached our retired lodgings without attracting the least attention."

—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Redgauntlet.*

XXVIII

A Story of the Chartist Riots

THE march of Bishop Hatton at the head of the Hell-cats into the mining districts was perhaps the most striking popular movement since the Pilgrimage of Grace. Mounted on a white mule, wall-eyed and of hideous form, the Bishop brandished a huge hammer with which he had announced he would destroy the enemies of the people: all butties, doggies, dealers in truck and tommy, middle masters and main masters. Some thousand Hell-cats followed him brandishing bludgeons, or armed with bars of iron, pickhandles, and hammers. On each side of the Bishop, on a donkey, was one of his little sons, as demure and earnest as if he were handling his file. A flowing standard of silk inscribed with the Charter, and which had been presented to him by the delegate, was borne before him like the oriflamme. Never was such a gaunt, grim crew. As they advanced their numbers continually increased for they arrested all labour in their progress. Every engine, was stopped, the plug was driven out of every boiler, every fire was extinguished, every man was turned out. The decree went forth that labour was to cease until the Charter was the law of the land: the mine and the mill, the foundry and the loom-shop were until that consummation to be idle: nor was the mighty pause to be confined to these great enterprises. Every trade of every kind and

description was to be stopped: tailor and cobbler, brush-maker and sweep, tinker and carter, mason and builder, all, all; for all an enormous Sabbath that was to compensate for any incidental suffering that it induced by the increased means and the elevated condition it ultimately would insure—that paradise of artizans, that Utopia of Toil, embalmed in those ringing words, sounds cheerful to the Saxon race—"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

At Mowbray Castle the scout that Mr. Mountchesney had sent off to gather news had returned, and with intelligence that all had ended happily, and that the people were dispersing and returning to the town.

The company staying at Mowbray had viewed the castle, and were in the music-room, and Sybil Gerard had been prevailed upon, though with reluctance, to sing. Some Spanish church music which she found there called forth all her powers: all was happiness, delight, rapture, Lady Maud in a frenzy of friendship, Mr. Mountchesney convinced that the country in August might be delightful, and Lady Joan almost gay because Alfred was pleased. Lady de Mowbray had been left in her boudoir with the *Morning Post*. Sybil had just finished a ravishing air, there was a murmur of luncheon—when suddenly the dog, who had persisted in following his mistress, and whom Mr. Mountchesney had gallantly introduced into the music-room, rose, and coming forward from the corner in which he reposed, barked violently.

"How now!" said Mr. Mountchesney.

"Harold!" said Sybil in a tone of remonstrance and surprise.

But the dog not only continued to bark but even howled. At this moment the groom of the chambers entered the room abruptly and with a face of mystery said that he wished to speak with Mr. Mountchesney. That gentleman immediately withdrew. He was absent some little time, the

dog very agitated; Lady Joan becoming disquieted, when he returned. His changed air struck the vigilant eye of his wife.

"What has happened Alfred?" she said.

"Oh! don't be alarmed," he replied with an obvious affection of ease. "There are some troublesome people in the park; stragglers I suppose from the rioters. The gate keeper ought not to have let them pass. I have given directions to Bentley what to do, if they come to the castle."

"Let us go to mama," said Lady Joan.

And they were all about leaving the music room, when a servant came running in and called out, "Mr. Bentley told me to say, sir, they are in sight."

"Very well," said Mr. Mountchesney in a calm tone but changing colour. "You had better go to your mama, Joan, and take Maud and our friend with you. I will stay below for a while," and notwithstanding the remonstrances of his wife, Mr. Mountchesney went to the hall.

"I don't know what to do, sir," said the house steward. "They are a very strong party."

"Close all the windows, lock and bar all the doors," said Mr. Mountchesney. "I am frightened," he continued, "about your lord. I fear he may fall in with these people."

"My lord is at Mowbray," said Mr. Bentley. "He must have heard of this mob there."

And now emerging from the plantations and entering on the lawns, the force and description of the invading party were easier to distinguish. They were numerous, though consisting of only a section of the original expedition, for Gerard had collected a great portion of the Mowbray men, and they preferred being under his command to following a stranger whom they did not much like on a somewhat licentious adventure of which their natural leader disapproved. The invading section therefore were principally composed of Hell-cats, though singular enough Morley of all men in

the world accompanied them, attended by Devilsdust, Dandy Mick, and others of that youthful class of which these last were the idols and heroes. There were perhaps eighteen hundred or two thousand persons armed with bars and bludgeons, in general a grimy crew, whose dress and appearance revealed the kind of labour to which they were accustomed. The difference between them and the minority of Mowbray operatives was instantly recognisable.

When they perceived the castle this dreadful band gave a ferocious shout. Lady de Mowbray showed blood; she was composed and courageous. She observed the mob from the window, and re-assuring her daughters and Sybil, she said she would go down and speak to them. She was on the point of leaving the room with this object when Mr. Mountchesney entered and hearing her purpose, dissuaded her from attempting it. "Leave all to me," he said; "and make yourselves quite easy; they will go away, I am certain they will go away," and he again quitted them.

In the meantime Lady de Mowbray and her friends observed the proceedings below. When the main body had advanced within a few hundred yards of the castle, they halted and seated themselves on the turf. This step reassured the garrison: it was generally held to indicate that the intentions of the invaders were not of a very settled or hostile character; that they had visited the place probably in a spirit of frolic, and if met with tact and civility might ultimately be induced to retire from it without much annoyance. This was evidently the opinion of Mr. Mountchesney from the first; and when an uncouth being on a white mule, attended by twenty or thirty miners, advanced to the castle and asked for Lord de Mowbray, Mr. Mountchesney met them with kindness, saying that he regretted his father-in-law was absent, expressed his readiness to represent him, and inquired their pleasure. His courteous bearing evidently had an influence on the Bishop, who, dropping his usual brutal tone, mumbled something about his wish to drink Lord de Mowbray's health.

"You shall all drink his health," said Mr. Mountchesney, humouring him, and he gave directions that a couple of barrels of ale should be broached in the park before the castle. The Bishop was pleased, the people were in good humour, some men began dancing, it seemed that the cloud had blown over, and Mr. Mountchesney sent up a bulletin to Lady de Mowbray that all danger was past and that he hoped in ten minutes they would all have disappeared.

The ten minutes had expired: the Bishop was still drinking ale, and Mr. Mountchesney still making civil speeches and keeping his immediate attendants in humour.

"I wish they would go," said Lady de Mowbray.

"How wonderfully Alfred has managed them," said Lady Joan.

"After all," said Lady Maud, "it must be confessed that the people——" Her sentence was interrupted; Harold who had been shut out but who had laid down without quietly, though moaning at intervals, now sprang at the door with so much force that it trembled on its hinges, while the dog again barked with renewed violence. Sybil went to him: he seized her dress with his teeth and would have pulled her away. Suddenly uncouth and mysterious sounds were heard, there was a loud shriek, the gong in the hall thundered, the great alarm bell of the tower sounded without, and the housekeeper followed by the female domestics rushed into the room.

"O! my lady, my lady," they all exclaimed at the same time, "the Hell-cats are breaking into the castle."

Before any one of the terrified company could reply, the voice of Mr. Mountchesney was heard. He was approaching them; he was no longer calm. He hurried into the room; he was pale, evidently greatly alarmed. "I have come to you," he said; "these fellows have got in below. While there is time and we can manage them, you must leave the place."

"I am ready for anything," said Lady de Mowbray.

Lady Joan and Lady Maud wrung their hands in frantic terror. Sybil, very pale, said, "Let me go down; I may know some of these men."

"No, no," said Mr. Mountchesney. "They are not Mowbray people. It would not be safe."

Dreadful sounds were now heard; a blending of shouts and oaths and hideous merriment. Their hearts trembled.

"The mob are in the house, sir," called out Mr. Bentley, rushing up to them. "They say they will see everything."

"Let them see everything," said Lady de Mowbray, "but make a condition that they first let us go. Try, Alfred, try to manage them before they are utterly ungovernable."

Mr. Mountchesney again left them on this desperate mission. Lady de Mowbray and all the women remained in the chamber. Not a word was spoken: the silence was complete. Even the maid-servants had ceased to sigh and sob. A feeling something like desperation was stealing over them.

The dreadful sounds continued—increased. They seemed to approach nearer. It was impossible to distinguish a word, and yet their import was frightful and ferocious.

"Lord, have mercy on us all!" exclaimed the housekeeper unable to restrain herself. The maids began to cry.

After an absence of about five minutes Mr. Mountchesney again hurried in and leading away Lady de Mowbray, he said, "You haven't a moment to lose. Follow us!"

There was a general rush, and following Mr. Mountchesney, they passed rapidly into several apartments, the fearful noises every moment increasing, until they reached the library which opened on the terrace. The windows were broken, the terrace crowded with people, several of the mob were in the room, even Lady de Mowbray cried out and fell back.

"Come on," said Mr. Mountchesney. "The mob have possession of the castle. It is our only chance."

"But the mob are here," said Lady de Mowbray, much terrified.

"I see some Mowbray faces," cried Sybil, springing forward, with a flashing eye and a glowing cheek. Bamford and Samuel Carr: Bamford, if you be my father's friend, aid us now; and Samuel Carr, I was with your mother this morning: did she think I should meet her son thus? No, you shall not enter," said Sybil, advancing. They recognised her, they paused. "I know you, Couchman; you told us once at the convent that we might summon you in our need. I summon you now. O, men, men!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "What is this? Are you led away by strangers to such deeds? Why, I know you all! You came here to aid, I am sure, and not to harm. Guard these ladies; save them from these foreigners! There's Butler, he'll go with us, and Godfrey Wells. Shall it be said you let your neighbours be plundered and assailed by strangers and never tried to shield them? Now, my good friends, I entreat, I adjure you, Butler, Wells, Couchman, what would Walter Gerard say, your friend that you have so often followed, if he saw this?"

"Gerard for ever!" shouted Couchman.

"Gerard for ever!" exclaimed a hundred voices.

"'Tis his blessed daughter," said others; "'tis Sybil, our angel Sybil."

"Stand by Sybil Gerard."

Sybil had made her way upon the terrace, and had collected around her a knot of stout followers, who, whatever may have been their original motive, were now resolved to do her bidding. The object of Mr. Mountchesney was to descend the side-step of the terrace and gain the flower-garden, from whence there were means of escape. But the throng was still too fierce to permit Lady de Mowbray and her companions to attempt the passage, and all that Sybil

and her followers could at present do, was to keep the mob off from entering the library, and to exert themselves to obtain fresh recruits.

At this moment an unexpected aid arrived.

"Keep back there! I call upon you in the name of God to keep back!" exclaimed a voice of one struggling and communing with the rioters, a voice which all immediately recognised. It was that of Mr. St. Lys. "Charles Gardner, I have been your friend. The aid I gave you was often supplied to me by this house. Why are you here?"

"For no evil purpose, Mr. St. Lys. I came as others did, to see what was going on."

"Then you see a deed of darkness. Struggle against it. Aid me and Philip Warner in this work; it will support you at the judgment. Tressel, Tressel, stand by me and Warner. That's good, that's right! And you too, Daventry, and you, and you. I knew you would wash your hands of this fell deed. It is not Mowbray men who would do this. That's right, that's right! Form a band. Good again. There's not a man that joins us now who does not make a friend for life."

Mr. St. Lys had been in the neighbourhood when the news of the visit of the mob to the castle reached him. He anticipated the perilous consequences. He hastened immediately to the scene of action. He had met Warner the handloom weaver in his way, and enlisted his powerful influence with the people on his side.

The respective bands of Sybil and Mr. St. Lys in time contrived to join. Their numbers were no longer contemptible; they were animated by the words and presence of their leaders: St. Lys struggling in their midst; Sybil maintaining her position on the terrace, and inciting all around her to courage and energy.

The multitude were kept back, the passage to the side-steps of the terrace was clear.

"Now," said Sybil, and she encouraged Lady de Mowbray, her daughters, and followers to advance. It was a fearful struggle to maintain the communication, but it was a successful one. They proceeded breathless and trembling, until they reached what was commonly called the Grotto, but which was in fact a subterranean way excavated through a hill and leading to the bank of a river where there were boats. The entrance of this tunnel was guarded by an iron gate, and Mr. Mountchesney had secured the key. The gate was opened, Warner and his friends made almost superhuman efforts at this moment to keep back the multitude, Lady de Mowbray and her daughters had passed through, when there came one of those violent undulations usual in mobs, and which was occasioned by a sudden influx of persons attracted by what was occurring, and Sybil and those who immediately surrounded her and were guarding the retreat were carried far away. The gate was closed, the rest of the party had passed, but Sybil was left, and found herself entirely among strangers.

In the meantime the castle was in possession of the mob. The first great rush was to the cellars: the Bishop himself headed this onset, nor did he rest until he was seated among the prime bins of the noble proprietor. This was not a crisis of corkscrews; the heads of the bottles were knocked off with the same promptitude and dexterity as if they were shelling nuts or decapitating shrimps; the choicest wines of Christendom were poured down the thirsty throats that ale and spirits had hitherto only stimulated; Tummas was swallowing Burgundy; Master Nixon had got hold of a batch of tokay; while the Bishop himself, seated on the ground and leaning against an arch, the long perspective of the cellars full of rapacious figures brandishing bottles and torches, alternately quaffed some very old Port and some Madeira of many voyages, and was making up his mind as to their respective and relative merits.

While the cellars and offices were thus occupied, bands

were parading the gorgeous saloons and gazing with wonderment on their decorations and furniture. Some grimy ruffians had thrown themselves with disdainful delight on the satin couches and the state beds; others rifled the cabinets with an idea that they must be full of money, and finding little in their way, had strewn their contents—papers and books and works of art—over the floors of the apartments; sometimes a band who had escaped from below with booty came up to consummate their orgies in the magnificence of the dwelling-rooms. Among these were Nixon and his friends, who stared at the pictures and stood before the tall mirrors with still greater astonishment. Indeed many of them had never seen an ordinary looking-glass in their lives.

"'Tis Nature!" said Master Nixon, surveying himself, and turning to Juggins.

Many of these last grew frantic, and finished their debauch by the destruction of everything around them.

But while these scenes of brutal riot were occurring there was one select but resolute band who shared in none of these excesses. Morley, followed by half a dozen Mowbray lads and two chosen Hell-cats, leaving all the confusion below, had ascended the great staircase, traced his way down a corridor to the winding steps of the Round Tower, and supplied with the necessary instruments, had forced his entrance into the muniment room of the castle. It was a circular chamber lined with tall fire-proof cases. These might have presented invincible obstacles to any other than the pupils of Bishop Hatton; as it was, in some instances the locks, in others the hinges, yielded in time, though after prolonged efforts, to the resources of their art; and while Dandy Mick and his friends kept watch at the entrance, Morley and Devilsdust proceeded to examine the contents of the cases: piles of parchment deeds, bundles of papers arranged and docketed, many boxes of various size and materials; but the desired object was not visible. A baffled

expression came over the face of Morley; he paused for an instant in his labours. The thought of how much he had sacrificed for this, and only to fail, came upon him—upon him, the votary of Moral Power in the midst of havoc which he had organised and stimulated. He cursed Baptist Hatton in his heart.

"The knaves have destroyed them," said Devilsdust. "I thought how it would be. They never would run the chance of a son of Labour being lord of all this."

Some of the cases were very deep, and they had hitherto in general, in order to save time, proved their contents with an iron rod. Now Morley with a desperate air mounting on some steps that were in the room, commenced formally rifling the cases and throwing their contents on the floor; it was soon strewn with deeds and papers and boxes which he and Devilsdust the moment they had glanced at them hurled away. At length when all hope seemed to have vanished, clearing a case which at first appeared only to contain papers, Morley struck something at its back; he sprang forward with outstretched arm, his body was half hid in the cabinet, and he pulled out with triumphant exultation the box, painted blue and blazoned with the arms of Valence. It was neither large nor heavy; he held it out to Devilsdust without saying a word, and Morley descending the steps sate down for a moment on a pile of deeds and folded his arms.

At this juncture the discharge of musketry was heard.

"Hilloa!" said Devilsdust with a queer expression Morley started from his seat. Dandy Mick rushed into the room. "Troops, troops! there are troops here!" he exclaimed.

"Let us descend," said Morley. "In the confusion we may escape. I will take the box," and they left the muniment room.

One of their party whom Mick had sent forward to reconnoitre fell back upon them. "They are not troops,"

he said; "they are yeomanry; they are firing away and cutting every one down. They have cleared the ground floor of the castle and are in complete possession below. We cannot escape this way."

"Those accursed locks!" said Morley, clenching the box. "Time has beat us. Let us see, let us see." He ran back into the muniment room and examined the egress from the window. It was just possible for any one very lithe and nimble to vault upon the roof of the less elevated part of the castle. Revolving this, another scout rushed in and said, "Comrades, they are here! they are ascending the stairs."

Morley stamped on the ground with rage and despair. Then seizing Mick by the hand he said, "You see this window; can you by any means reach that roof?"

"One may as well lose one's neck that way," said Mick. "I'll try."

"Off! If you land, I will throw this box after you. Now mind; take it to the convent at Mowbray and deliver it yourself from me to Sybil Gerard. It is light; there are only papers in it; but they will give her her own again, and she will not forget you."

"Never mind that," said Mick. "I only wish I may live to see her."

The tramp of the ascending troopers was heard.

"Good-bye my hearties," said Mick, and he made the spring. He seemed stunned, but he might recover. Morley watched him and flung the box.

"And now," he said, drawing a pistol, "we may fight our way yet. I'll shoot the first man who enters, and then you must rush on them with your bludgeons."

The force that had so unexpectedly arrived at this scene of devastation was a troop of the yeomanry regiment of Lord Marney. The strike in Lancashire and the revolt in the mining districts had so completely drained this county of military, that the lord lieutenant had insisted on Lord

Marney quitting his agricultural neighbourhood and quartering himself in the region of factories. Within the last two days he had fixed his head-quarters at a large manufacturing town within ten miles of Mowbray, and a despatch on Sunday evening from the mayor of that rown having reached him, apprising him of the invasion of the miners, he ordered a troop under the command of Captain Egremont to march there on the following morning.

Egremont had not departed more than two hours when a horseman arrived at Lord Marney's head-quarters, bringing a most alarming and exaggerated report of the insurrection and of the havoc that was probably impending. Lord Marney being of opinion that Egremont's forces were by no means equal to the occasion, resolved therefore at once to set out for Mowbray with his own troop. Crossing Mowbray Moor, he encountered a great multitude, now headed for purposes of peace by Walter Gerard. His mind inflamed by the accounts he had received, and hating at all times any popular demonstration, his lordship resolved without inquiry or preparation immediately to disperse them. The Riot Act was read with the rapidity with which grace is sometimes said at the head of a public table—a ceremony of which none but the performer and his immediate friends are conscious. The people were fired on and sabred. The indignant spirit of Gerard resisted; he struck down a trooper to the earth, and incited those about him not to yield. The father of Sybil was picked out — the real friend and champion of the People—and shot dead. Instantly arose a groan which almost quelled the spirit of Lord Marney, though armed and at the head of armed men. The people who before this were in general scared and dispersing, ready indeed to fly in all directions, no sooner saw their beloved leader fall than a feeling of frenzy came over them. They defied the troopers, though themselves armed only with stones and bludgeons; they rushed at the horsemen and tore them from their saddles, while a shower of

stones rattled on the helmet of Lord Marney and seemed never to cease. In vain the men around him charged the infuriated throng; the people returned to their prey, nor did they rest until Lord Marney fell lifeless on Mowbray Moor, literally stoned to death.

These disastrous events of course occurred at a subsequent period of the day to that on which half a dozen troopers were ascending the staircase of the Round Tower of Mowbray Castle. The distracted house steward of Lord de Mowbray had met and impressed upon them, now that the castle was once more in their possession, of securing the muniment room, for Mr. Bentley had witnessed the ominous ascent of Morley and his companions to that important chamber.

Morley and his companions had taken up an advantageous position at the head of the staircase.

"Surrender," said the commander of the yeomanry. "Resistance is useless."

Morley presented his pistol, but before he could pull the trigger a shot from a trooper in the rear, and who from his position could well observe the intention of Morley, struck Stephen in the breast; still he fired, but aimless and without effect. The troopers pushed on; Morley fainting, fell back with his friends who were frightened, except Devilsdust, who had struck hard and well, and who in turn had been slightly sabred. The yeomanry entered the muniment room almost at the same time as their foes, leaving Devilsdust behind them, who had fallen, and who, cursing the Capitalist who had wounded him, managed to escape. Morley fell when he had regained the room. The rest surrendered.

"Morley! Stephen Morley!" exclaimed the commander of the yeomanry. "You, you here!"

"Yes. I am sped," he said in a faint voice. "No, no succour. It is useless, and I desire none. Why I am here is a mystery; let it remain so. The world will misjudge

me; the man of peace they will say was a hypocrite. The world will be wrong, as it always is. Death is bitter," he said with a deep sigh, and speaking with great difficulty, "more bitter from you; but just. We have struggled together before, Egremont. I thought I had scotched you then, but you escaped. Our lives have been a struggle since we first met. Your star has controlled mine; and now I feel I have sacrificed life and fame—dying men prophesy—for your profit and honour. O Sybil!" and with this name half sighed upon his lips the votary of Moral Power and the Apostle of Community ceased to exist.

Meanwhile Sybil, separated from her friends, who had made their escape through the grotto, was left with only Harold for her protector, for she had lost even Warner in the crush. She looked around in vain for some Mowbray face that she could recognise, but after some fruitless research, a loud shouting in the distance, followed by the firing of musketry, so terrified all around her, that the mob in her immediate neighbourhood dispersed as if by magic, and she remained alone crouching in a corner of the flower-garden, while dreadful shouts and shrieks and yells resounded from the distance, occasionally firing, the smoke floating to her retreat. She could see from where she stood the multitude flying about the park in all directions, and therefore she thought it best to remain in her present position and await the terrible events. She concluded that some military force had arrived, and that if she could maintain her present post, she hoped that the extreme danger might pass. But while she indulged in these hopes, a dark cloud of smoke came descending in the garden. It could not be produced by musket or carbine: its volume was too heavy even for ordnance: and in a moment there were sparks mingled with its black form; and then the shouting and shrieking, which had in some degree subsided, suddenly broke out again with increased force and wildness. The castle was on fire.

Whether from heedlessness or from insane intention, for the deed sealed their own doom, the drunken Hell-cats brandishing their torches, while they rifled the cellars and examined every closet and corner of the offices, had set fire to the lower part of the building, and the flames that had for some time burnt unseen, had now gained the principal chambers. The Bishop was lying senseless in the main cellar, surrounded by his chief officers in the same state: indeed the whole of the basement was covered with the recumbent figures of Hell-cats, as black and thick as torpid flies during the last days of their career. The funeral pile of the children of Woden was a sumptuous one; it was prepared and lighted by themselves; and the flame that, rising from the keep of Mowbray, announced to the startled country that in a short hour the splendid mimickry of Norman rule would cease to exist, told also the pitiless fate of the ruthless savage, who, with analogous pretension, had presumed to style himself the Liberator of the People.

The clouds of smoke, the tongues of flame, that now began to mingle with them, the multitude whom this new incident and impending catastrophe summoned back to the scene, forced Sybil to leave the garden and enter the park. It was in vain she endeavoured to gain some part less frequented than the rest, and to make her way unobserved. Suddenly a band of drunken ruffians, with shouts and oaths, surrounded her; she shrieked in frantic terror; Harold sprang at the throat of the foremost; another advanced, Harold left his present prey and attacked the new assailant. The brave dog did wonders, but the odds were fearful; and the men had bludgeons, were enraged, and had already wounded him. One ruffian had grasped the arm of Sybil, another had clenched her garments, when an officer, covered with dust and gore, sabre in hand, jumped from the terrace, and hurried to the rescue. He cut down one man, thrust away another, and placing his left arm round Sybil, he defended her with his sword,

while Harold now become furious, flew from man to man, and protected her on the other side. Her assailants were routed, they made a staggering flight; the officer turned round and pressed Sybil to his heart.

"We will never part again," said Egremont.

"Never," murmured Sybil.

In the Spring of the next year Lady Bardolf was making a morning visit to Lady St. Julians.

"I heard they were to be at Lady Palmerston's last night," said Lady St. Julians.

"No," said Lady Bardolf, shaking her head, "they make their first appearance at Deloraine House. We meet there on Thursday I know."

"Well, I must say," said Lady St. Julians, "that I am curious to see her."

"Lord Valentine met them last year at Naples."

"And what does he say of her?"

"Oh! he raves!"

"What a romantic history! And what a fortunate man is Lord Marney. If one could only have foreseen events!" exclaimed Lady St. Julians. "He was always a favourite of mine though. But still I thought his brother was the very last person who ever would die. He was so very hard!"

"I fear Lord Marney is entirely lost to us," said Lady Bardolf, looking very solemn.

"Ah! he always had a twist," said Lady St. Julians, "and used to breakfast with that horrid Mr. Trenchard, and do those sort of things. But still, with his immense fortune, I should think he would become rational."

"You may well say immense," said Lady Bardolf. "Mr. Ormsby, and there is no better judge of another man's income, says there are not three peers in the kingdom who have so much a year clear."

"They say the Mowbray estate is forty thousand a year," said Lady St. Julians. "Poor Lady de Mowbray! I

understand that Mr. Mountchesney has resolved not to appeal against the verdict."

"You know he has not a shadow of a chance," said Lady Bardolf. "Ah! what changes we have seen in that family! They say the writ of right killed poor Lord de Mowbray, but to my mind he never recovered the burning of the Castle. We went over to them directly, and I never saw a man so cut up. We wanted them to come to us at Firebrace, but he said he should leave the county immediately. I remember Lord Bardolf mentioning to me, that he looked like a dying man."

"Well, I must say," said Lady St. Julians, rallying as it were from a fit of abstraction, "that I am most curious to see Lady Marney."

The reader will infer from this conversation that Dandy Mick, in spite of his stunning fall, and all dangers which awaited him on his recovery, had contrived, in spite of fire and flame, sabre and carbine, trampling troopers and plundering mobs, to reach the Convent of Mowbray with the box of papers. There he enquired for Sybil, in whose hands, and whose hands alone, he was enjoined to deposit them. She was still absent, but, faithful to his instructions, Mick would deliver his charge to none other, and exhausted by the fatigues of the terrible day, he remained in the courtyard of the convent, lying down with the box for his pillow until Sybil, under the protection of Egremont, herself returned. Then he fulfilled his mission. Sybil was too agitated at the moment to perceive all its import, but she delivered the box into the custody of Egremont, who, desiring Mick to follow him to his hotel, bade farewell to Sybil, who, equally with himself, was then ignorant of the fatal encounter on Mowbray Moor.

We must drop a veil over the anguish which its inevitable and speedy revelation brought to the daughter of Gerard. Her love for her father was one of those profound emotions which seemed to form a constituent part of her

existence. She remained for a long period in helpless woe, soothed only by the sacred cares of Ursula. There was another mourner in this season of sorrow who must not be forgotten, and that was Lady Marney. All that tenderness and the most considerate thought could devise to soften sorrow and reconcile her to a change of life which at the first has in it something depressing were extended by Egremont to Arabella. He supplied in an instant every arrangement which had been neglected by his brother, but which could secure her convenience and tend to her happiness. Between Marney Abbey where he insisted for the present that Arabella should reside and Mowbray, Egremont passed his life for many months, until, by some management which we need not trace or analyse, Lady Marney came over one day to the Convent at Mowbray and carried back Sybil to Marney Abbey, never again to quit it until, on her bridal day, when the Earl and Countess of Marney departed for Italy, where they passed nearly a year.

During the previous period however many important events had occurred. Lord Marney had placed himself in communication with Mr. Hatton, who had soon become acquainted with all that had occurred in the muniment room of Mowbray Castle. The idea that he had deprived Sybil of her inheritance, had, ever since he had became acquainted with her, been the plague-spot of Hatton's life, and there was nothing that he desired more ardently than to see her restored to her rights, and to be instrumental in that restoration. How successful he was in pursuing her claim, the reader has already learnt.

Dandy Mick was rewarded for all the dangers he had encountered in the service of Sybil, and what he conceived was the vindication of popular rights. Lord Marney established him in business, and Mick took Devilsdust for a partner. Devilsdust having thus obtained a position in society and become a capitalist, thought it but a due

homage to the social decencies to assume a decorous appellation, and he called himself by the name of the town where he was born. The firm of Radley, Mowbray & Co., is a rising one; and will probably furnish in time a crop of members of Parliament and Peers of the realm.

—Lord Beaconsfield, *Sybil.*

THE END

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